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Educational Theory

Volume XI January, 1961 Number 1

TWO QUESTIONS ABOUT THE TEACHING OF MORAL VALUES

BY JAMES McCLELLAN

IN TRYING TO THINK ABOUT THE CONTENT AND METHODS OF TEACHING MORALITY, I ENCOUNTER TWO QUESTIONS THAT I'VE NOT BEEN ABLE TO ANSWER. The purpose of this note is to request that my colleagues turn their minds to these questions and lend me the products of their thinking.

Question I. What relation is there between teaching moral truth and training in moral behavior?

The peculiar wording comes in part, I'm afraid, from an effort to distinguish this question from its Platonic ancestors: Is virtue a form of knowledge? Does virtue's being teachable depend on its being knowledge?

I gladly acknowledge my question's ancient lineage. Insofar as the assumptions underlying my question are the same as those of Plato, the questions are identical. But for reasons that are irrelevant to this note, I think the assumptions differ, therefore, also the questions. If there is a confirmed Platonist among my readers who believes, after considering the arguments, that my first question is merely a restatement of the old, then I can plead only that I have not been entirely satisfied by Plato's answers.

The meaning of the questions can be understood only in relation to certain assumptions, and to these we now turn.

PART A. LOGICO-ETHICAL ASSUMPTIONS

Assumption 1. Certain sentences in which moral predicates are used essentially are true and their contradictories false. What is expressed by these sentences I shall call moral truth or moral falsehood.

This assumption can be questioned in two ways: one can deny its truth or one can ask for an explanation of its truth. Now an explanation of moral truth is difficult. A truly satisfactory explanation, if one were possible, should include

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answers to at least the following questions: Is moral truth an instance of the general class of empirical (or syntactical, or analytic, or formal) truth? Does a statement of moral truth admit a significant opposite? What counts as a final test when there is disagreement over the truth of a given moral statement? And so on.

The obvious fact that these are very difficult questions does not imply that moral truth is in principle unexplainable. But even if that should turn out *contra hypothesi* to be the case, i.e., that moral truth is unexplainable, even so, we should not have conclusive grounds for denying that moral statements can be true or false. We shall return to the problem of explaining moral truth later, but at this point please allow me two dogmatic assertions:

To question Assumption 1 in the sense of asking: How is moral truth to be explained? is an important thing to do.

To question Assumption 1 in the sense of denying its truth is, however, both a common and a foolish mistake.

The defense of Assumption 1 begins (with an intended apology to G. E. Moore) by considering the sentences:

P: One ought to treat human beings humanely and justly.
and not-P: One has no obligation to treat human beings humanely and justly.

P is true; not-P is false. Therefore there is at least one moral truth and one moral falsehood. Assumption 1 Q.E.D.

What do I mean by 'true'? Simply as in Quine's semantic conception of truth. The sentence: "One ought to treat human beings humanely and justly." is true if, and only if, one ought to treat human beings humanely and justly. Hence to deny that P is true is to deny that one ought to treat human beings humanely and justly. Conversely, the sentence that one ought, etc. implies P is true.

This would seem to dispose of the matter, but for one thing: No one argues that not-P is true and P false. The attack is to deny that either is meaningful. There are two sides to the argument on the meaningfulness of P: one is genuine, the other Cartesian.

A genuine question about *meaning* is not too difficult to answer. Consider Miss G who has genuine doubts; she says, "I don't understand your word 'humanely', nor your word 'justly'. What do you mean?"

This question we usually answer with a paradigm or parable. (More than an etymological similarity between these two words!) "The Good Samaritan acted humanely. It is unjust to deny people legal or economic privileges because of skin color. I know this isn't nearly so precise as we might wish, and the lack of precision may make our moral choices more difficult than they should be otherwise. But within the limits of precision possible, you do understand my meaning, do you not, Miss G?"

The hopefully rising inflection draws this response: "Oh yes, now I know what you mean by 'justly', and 'humanely'. But I still and truly don't know what 'ought' or 'obligation' means. Explain please."

Again we try a paradigm-case-type argument. "Surely now, Miss G, you understand the *idea* of obligation; it's only that you never learned to use the words 'ought' and 'obligation' properly. Suppose Mrs. A gave you a beautiful diamond-studded watch to keep safely for her till she returned from a dangerous voyage. You came to be very fond of the watch, and when Mrs. A returned from her voyage several years later, you didn't want to return the watch. Suppose Mrs. A is resuming her travels in a few moments, but this time *never* to return. You can easily tell her that the watch was lost or stolen, and no one would ever know that you had broken your promise. But you would know, would you not, Miss G, that the right, just, and proper thing to do is to keep your promise and return the watch? Now we use the words 'ought' or 'have an obligation' so that, in this situation, it is true that you *ought* to return Mrs. A's watch, that you have an obligation to return her watch. [Not, of course, implying what would be false, that 'ought' and 'have an obligation' can *always* be used interchangeably.] Now when we assert P, we are using 'ought' in a sense very similar to the sense it has in the sentence, "You ought to return Mrs. A's watch." So you see, Miss G, you did understand the meaning after all."

Miss G could respond in a number of ways, but let us require her, unlike many of her sex, to have a sense of relevance. That narrows her responses to two:

(i) "Oh yes, now I see what you mean." or

(ii) "Duuhh."

By response (ii) I mean that she simply cannot understand the point of a moral parable. For that deficiency, Aristotle recommends punishment, but there may be more efficient and possibly more charitable methods of teaching. (Do we still administer electrical or chemical shock to psychoneurotic patients?) Or it may be the case that in a way slightly like color-blindness or limits in mathematical ability, we are faced with an ineluctable barrier to learning. What kind of society we should have if most people genuinely made response (ii) to our story is difficult to imagine. No doubt, being the marvelously adaptive creatures we are, we could find some way to make it go.

Miss G, let us hope, has given up her doubts about the meaning of P. Mr. C, however, is ready to ride into the lists. His problem, of course, is to avoid the lance that so easily upset Miss G. One way to do this is to change the rules so that jousters must run past each other without contact. Mr. C can follow A. J. Ayer's lead and legislate that the words 'meaningful' and 'meaningless' will be so used that the following argument yields a true conclusion: Premise I: Any grammatically ordered combination of words in which a moral predicate is used essentially is meaningless. Premise II: P is a combination of words in which a moral predicate is used essentially. Conclusion: Therefore P is meaningless.

Premise II is certainly correct, for P is a clear example of what it means for a sentence to contain a moral predicate used essentially. The essential *use* of a moral predicate in P contrasts with merely *mentioning* the moral predicate as in

S: A very often used verb expressing moral obligation is spelled non-phonetically in English.

If we allow Mr. C to legislate the use of 'meaningless' then he can stipulate Premise I. The logic is unquestionably valid. But we are unwilling to give Mr. C the lady's golden garter, for it is too clear that no lances have been splintered.

There are many ways of dealing with this kind of argument. One *can* say that Premise I is a concealed moral imperative stating the way we *ought* to use the terms 'meaningful' and 'meaningless,' i.e. as they are, reputedly, used in the analysis of physics. If Premise I involves (a peculiar logical relation in itself) a moral predicate essentially then it is either meaningless or self-contradictory. Or one *can* say that if P were merely a grammatically ordered combination of words, it would be impossible to distinguish between 'using essentially' and 'merely mentioning', so that P must be meaningful in the sense that

P': Any square number ought to treat other prime numbers really and tastily.

is *not* meaningful.

There are many possible replies similar to these.

But, for me, the more telling attack on Mr. C is the simpler one of saying: "Look, Mr. C. Given the grammatical structure of the English language, the usual meanings for the terms used in P, the usual distinction between 'meaningful' and 'meaningless', then P is meaningful. Any argument yielding a conclusion which contradicts this, is a *reductio ad absurdum* of at least one of its premises.

"Your Premise I in conjunction with a true premise, II, and valid logical reasoning, yields a false conclusion. But from true premises only true conclusions can be validly deduced. Therefore Premise I is false."

Mr. C may mumble a bit under his breath. He may claim we didn't understand his purpose: all he ever intended was to point out the interesting difference between the *sense* in which a scientific proposition is meaningful and the *sense* in which P is meaningful as contrasted with P'. Very well, we appreciate your helping us see this distinction, though the way you made it was tendentiously misleading.

Mr. C is really old hat, and his mumblings are of little import. Assumption 1 has stood up quite well so far, but when I add assumptions 2 and 3 we raise some fiercer tigers.

Assumption 2. The truth of moral sentences is in no way affected by the many and various uses made of these sentences.

Now Mr. C can raise a whole army to attack this. All that was established in the argument over Assumption 1 is that P is meaningful. But this still leaves it open to object that P can be "true" but not true. The important things about P, so go the modern analytic discussions, concern its truth in quotation marks, the uses to which it is put. These various uses define the sense in which P is "true." Thus Miss G can say to herself "I know it's true that one ought to treat human beings justly and humanely," and she may use this statement to heighten her own and her companions' titillation while they are viewing one of the more sadistic of the so-called Biblical films. But Assumption 2 closes the door on saying that such a *use* of P has anything to do with the *truth* of P.

I deliberately chose an extreme example. Most of the recent literature on the use of moral predicates is quite enlightening; it deals with cases in which we are trying to assign praise or blame, to decide what to do and not to do, to convince ourselves or others that we ought to do one thing rather than another, to exhort ourselves or others to do what really ought to be done, to change attitudes in ourselves or others toward some feature of the world, and to do other things within a context where moral statements are ordinarily considered relevant. But if the use actually *was* the meaning and hence established the "truth," there would be no reason for rejecting Miss G's use or any other use as morally irrelevant. What about using P as a practice exercise in a typing or telegraphy class?

Now it may be the case that from a *purely* linguistic, as opposed to pedagogical or philosophical, point of view, all the interesting and important things to say about P concern its uses, not its truth. But not *any* uses, only morally and logically *relevant* uses. If there were no independent meaning to P we would have no way of distinguishing relevant from irrelevant uses. All this is so obvious that it may safely be ignored in purely analytic discussion, but for educational and philosophical purposes it should be more than occasionally recalled.

Relative unimportance is, however, itself relative. The truth of P is relatively unimportant because it is so obvious. But consider:

Q. The use of mechanical contraception is morally wrong.

It is dreadfully important to know whether Q is true or false, and many otherwise morally competent persons apparently have a most difficult time getting the right answer. We know the many uses of Q, some of them laudable and some abominable, but knowing the uses does not, in and of itself, mean that we know whether it is true. Likewise: Is teaching that Q is used in morally relevant ways W_1, W_2, etc. the same as teaching that it is true or that it is false? Again no. Thus in respect to Q, truth or falsity is both independent from and pedagogically more important than its uses. This question of educational importance is obviously central; it is considered again.

I hope, not to have answered all the objections to Assumption 2, but at least to have placated those objectors who thought the statement meant more than it does. By itself, Assumption 2 is fairly innocuous in comparison with a consequence to be drawn from it, *viz.* since moral sentences are used largely to effect certain feelings and behavior in people, to say that the truth of a moral sentence is independent of its use is almost to affirm

Assumption 3'. The truth of moral sentences is independent of how people feel and behave.

But of course, 3' is false. For if no human being had ever had any pro or con feeling, had ever behaved in such a way that he understood moral praise or blame, etc., then no moral sentence would mean what such sentences mean for those who *do* have pro and con feelings, who *do* assign praise and blame, who *do* in short, use moral sentences in the morally relevant ways human beings in fact, use them. Thus if people did not feel and behave in general as they do, our moral language wouldn't mean what it does, and we have no way of knowing whether,

in that case, P would be true or false or even meaningful. Thus Assumption 3' must be false.

What can be said about

Assumption 3. The truth of any given moral is independent of the feeling and behavior of any one individual or of any sub-set, not inclusive, of the whole human species.

Very much further on this line and we shall encounter very spooky paradoxes. In fact Assumption 3 is in tenuous balance. Would it make any sense at all to say that P is true in a world in which only a single poor man believes it true? Now of course we simply wouldn't know what it means to assert P of a world that contained no human beings or other agents capable of having moral obligations. It is a question of fact whether there are living creatures on the third planet of Altair, and equally a question of fact whether such creatures, if they exist, are capable of having moral obligations. But assuming that they exist and that they are capable of having moral obligations: does the truth of P depend upon their believing it?

We must be careful to avoid the evasive phrase, 'true (or false) for them' when talking about P in relation to the members of some group that does or does not believe P. Let us not say 'Snow is white' is true for those, and only those, who believe it true. Nor '7+5=12' is true for those, and only those, who know and accept arithmetic as taught, for example, in the second grade of the usual American public school.

Though it seems initially plausible, we cannot say: those, and only those, who believe that snow is white believe that 'snow is white' is true. For one might have been taught and come to believe, wrongly, that any sentence of three terms and exactly eleven letters is true, without even knowing what the word 'snow' means. Such a person, we are permitted to say, believes that 'snow is white' is true but does not believe that snow is white.

Now this last distinction makes it possible to show how we must understand Assumption 3, and why Assumption 3 is so close to stating a paradox. We must understand it this way: We know that there are people who would not agree that P is true, neither in the sense that Miss G would not agree nor in the sense that Mr. C would not agree. (Miss G did not see what P really meant; Mr. C had a philosophical prejudice against the linguistic usage that permits us to say that P is true.) But let us consider that much maligned and hypothetical Duk-Duk who asserts (and acts as if he believes) that one ought to kill, rape, or rob all human beings not members of one's immediate tribe. Let us imagine that everyone with whom this savage fellow ever talked agreed that people ought to behave in that abominable fashion. Now Assumption 3 wants to say that no matter how many moral savages there are, P is still true. Or better, that the truth of P is independent of the alledgedly wide-spread existence of moral savages.

Or let us suppose that exhaustive archaeological research finally establishes the following curious fact: P was uttered for absolutely the first time by Witness Shadrack just as he was entering a fiery furnace. Meshach disagreed violently, while Abednego found it a challenging idea deserving further reflection. Assumption 3 wants to say that this curious fact and others like it are irrelevant to the truth of P.

But Assumption 3 cannot say only what it wants to say. It seems to say other things it does *not* want to say, things which may be summarized thus: that the truth of P is either like the truth of 'Snow is white' in that it depends on a *fact* or else that the truth of P like the truth of 'all bachelors are unmarried' in that it depends on the form. Yet the enormous amount of ethical argument, especially in this century, should have taught us that as yet we have no means of reducing P to a purely factual proposition nor to a purely formal or analytic proposition.

It is important to be perfectly clear on this matter of irreducibility. I can say, truthfully, that it is a fact that one ought to treat other human beings humanely and justly. But I hesitate to say: It is factually true that one ought to treat other human beings humanely and justly. The difference is this: When I say it is a fact that X, all I mean is that X, perhaps that *X*, emphatically. When I say that it is factually true that X, I mean that X is true, can be justified, if at all, only by immediate or ultimate appeal to the presence of an observable property.

Now one is tempted to say that P is factually true, for moral obligation has both exteriority and constraint. But to assert that it is factually true invites test by observation, yet what property could I observe in testing P? To a statistical treatment of acts of humanity and justice? Obviously not. Then to the moral sentiments, the feeling *and* behavior, of people? Yes, except this seems to contradict Assumption 3. We will return to this in a moment.

But first, note that P has some features that invite us to say that it is analytically true. For example, if you grant the usual English meanings of the terms and the syntactical rules for forming English sentences, then you must grant that P is true. The case of the mythical Duk-Duk does not alter this. He may speak English but translate the true Duk-Duk statement:

R: Holmo goreistmy skistob borge nakabag vlyuminie magox zdapur, yet.

as

R^1: One ought to kill, rape, or rob all human beings not members of one's immediate tribe.

Two possibilities occur to one here. Either Duk-Duks believe false sentences like R and perhaps even self-contradictory ones like "There is no natural number large than 40," or else R was mistranslated. Perhaps in strictly literal Duk-Duk R means that God will not punish one who kills, rapes, and robs. Or that it brings Duk-Duk honor on the head of a man who kills, etc. The completely general, ethical word 'ought' may simply not appear in the Duk-Duk vocabulary.

But I am using 'humanely' for example, in such a fashion that in addition to being descriptive of a certain general courtesy and sensitivity, the term *means* "in that mode of treatment that all human beings ought to exhibit toward other human beings." Then if my student says to me, "I know exactly what you mean by 'ought' and by 'humanely,' but I don't see why everyone *ought* to behave humanely;" I should have to reply, among other things, "You don't know *exactly* what I mean by 'humanely'."

There is another feature about P that makes us wish to say that it is a priori, in C. I. Lewis' sense of a priori, and therefore, Lewis' other arguments being granted, analytic. For certainly P doesn't *determine* in actual situations either what will occur or what any agent ought to do. The discussion here has ignored the agent:

his volition, ignorance and error, and limitations of capacity. It is clear, however, that no consideration of concrete judgment, answering the question "What is the best thing for me (or us) to do in these circumstances?" can be deduced from P and other sentences like P. Thus P, while meaningful and true, is not determinative of existential reality; and this fact invites us to say that it is analytically true.

But, of course, P is not precisely an analytic statement. For if one denies P, we don't accuse him of contradicting himself but of being in error in his beliefs about moral obligation. In any case, the question of P's being analytically true is not particularly relevant to its being true. There are two reasons for the lack of relevance. First, when we are faced with apparently difficult cases like that of Q, we cannot decide truth or falsity by inspection of meanings alone. If analytic truth were an important consideration in the truth of P, it should also be the case of Q. Since it isn't in the latter, we doubt it in the former.

Second, we can imagine no purely analytic truth having the apparently existential character of P. Analytic truths, such as 'All bachelors are unmarried' translate as non-existential statements, e.g.

α): (x) (X is a bachelor) $\supset$ (X is unmarried).

This statement would be gratuitous if there were no bachelors, but its being true does not depend on the existence of bachelors.

Whereas P, when partially translated as non-existential statement:

β): (x) (X is an act of justice) $\supset$ (X ought to be done).

ceases to have its usual meaning. If we insist on a translation of P, it would have to be expressed much differently, perhaps something like this:

γ) (There is a quality of obligation) such that for any Act A, if (Act A is an act of justice) then (Act A has the quality of obligation.)

Now it is obvious that γ is not adequate, but making it so is far too complex for our needs here, yet making it adequate would involve adding to, e.g. the matter of the agent, not taking away, its existential character.

But if P's truth is existential, it is not analytic. Or, as it is put here, the question of P's analyticity is an unimportant question about the truth of P.

Speaking existentially, *where* is this quality of obligation? Where, indeed but in the feeling and behavior of people? This conclusion, however, again contradicts Assumption 3.

Now it might be possible to tinker with Assumption 3 until it said only what was true and implied nothing that was false. But I do not know how to do it. And even if I could, making a true statement of Assumption 3 would not answer the educational question that is really the goal of this inquiry.

Assumption 3 says truly that P's truth is independent of Duk-Duks and of the accident of Shadrach's having a convenient insight. It seems to imply, falsely, that therefore P is logically like either 'Snow is white' or like 'All bachelors are unmarried.' Both these implications are false: the first because we can point out no objects to observe that would show the truth of P as the observation of

snow's whiteness shows the truth of 'snow is white;' the second is false because the question of P's analyticity is irrelevant to its truth in a way that logically is quite different from the truth of 'All bachelors are unmarried.' Thus both the disjuncts seemingly implied by Assumption 3 are false.

Faced with this dilemma, I deny that Assumption 3 really implies what it seems to imply. Assumption 3 seems to imply this exhaustive and (*pace* Quine, M. G.White, *et al*) exclusive disjunct, only because we take it as natural that only in one or the other of these senses could a statement be true. And Assumptions 2 and 3 eliminate the possibility that we are merely talking about the genial "truth" of P, i.e. that many people seem to feel that one ought to treat, etc. No, we are talking about its truth, not "truth." This seems to imply that P is true either in the sense of 'snow is white' or 'All bachelors are unmarried males,' etc.

To deny that Assumption 3 implies the false disjunct, we can now see, is itself to imply that there is at least one sense of being true that is different from the examples of snow and bachelors. This is a genuinely confusing idea. It is, in that respect, different from the pseudo-confusions introduced by Miss G, Mr. C, the Duk-Duk, and other disputants who have appeared so far in the dialogue.

Having thus achieved the goal set for Part A we may turn to

PART B: EDUCATIONAL ASSUMPTIONS

beginning straighway with

> Assumption 4: To teach that a sentence is true morally requires that the learner understand a method for establishing that the sentence is true.

This for teachers is the ethical equivalent of negative utilitarianism in the Hippocratic oath. Without this ethical basis for teaching, the whole concept of intellectual honesty would be bankrupt. A positive defense of this ethical injunction seems otiose, but replies to some objections are in order.

Objector Alpha: "You mean to tell me that I have no right to teach that for a right triangle the square on the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the square on the sides, unless or until I can teach the method of proof that establishes it? That is absurd, and therefore so is Assumption 4."

Reply to Alpha: "You may teach the Pythagorean theorem as a rule of operation without any proof. You may not teach it as asserting or expressing a mathematical truth. You now do this properly in dealing with the binomial theorem for solving quadratic equations, telling the students that they should follow this rule, not that it is mathematically *true* that the binomial theorem is a general solution to quadratic equations. One moral imperative stemming from Assumption 4 is this: Distinguish clearly for yourself and for your students between teaching rules, which are neither true nor false, and teaching that certain statements are true."

Objector Beta: "You mean to tell me that, I can't teach my students that the universe is expanding without teaching the method of spectroanalysis which establishes that fact? Absurd!"

Reply to Beta: "Distinguish carefully among the following:

(i.) 'The universe is expanding' as an element in a cosmological myth or as a confession of faith. In that context, truth and falsehood are either of no importance or so intertwined that only radical surgery can distinguish them.

(ii.) 'Most astronomers today agree that at least in the present cosmological era the universe is expanding' as a sociological statement. The method for establishing *that* is readily available.

(iii.) 'The universe is expanding', a true statement in the science of astronomy. *Caveat magister.*"

The analogies with P are obvious. We do and we should teach young children that they ought to treat other human beings humanely and justly, simply a system of rules: "Be kind to younger children! Don't be a bully! Play fair! Don't cheat!" These rules are neither true nor false.

We also rightly teach youngsters certain sociological and historical facts about our ethical principles. We tell them: "Many people did not, indeed do not, believe that they ought to treat *all* human beings humanely and justly. Such people believe that only a limited in-group deserves this consideration. The general statement of this ethical principle has often, though not invariably, been associated with a universalized deity. Etc." These statements are established by the same methods as other historical or anthropological statements.

But there are certain non-analogies between teaching P on one hand and teaching the mathematical and cosmological statements on the other hand. Specifically two non-analogies:

(1.) A person who had used neither the Pythagorean nor the binomial theorem as a rule could yet learn and understand fully the meaning and truth of the theorems as formally proved statements within mathematical systems. But no one who had not first found his behavior externally directed by rules of courtesy and fair play could ever understand fully the meaning and truth of P. That is to say: P is related to the prescriptive rule: "Don't be a bully," differently from the way the Pythagorean theorem is related to the rule reputedly, though most likely not, used by the Egyptian pyramid builders: "To make a square corner, take a rope divided into 12 equal lengths and bend it into a triangle taut from the three corners, so that there are 3 lengths on one side, 4 lengths on another, and five on the third. Where the 3 unit side joins the 4 unit side is a square corner." The teacher of mathematics may or may not find it pedagogically useful to teach the 3: 4: 5 rule in connection with teaching the Pythagorean theorem, but learning the rule is certainly not a *necessary* condition for learning the theorem.

But in a distinctly reversed fashion, having learned the rule: Don't be a bully! is a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for learning P. One could, of course, teach youngsters whose behavior had never been regulated by the rule 'Don't be a bully!' to recite "P: One ought to treat . . ." and to recite "and P is true." The continued repetition of P and 'P is true' *might*, by a kind of hypnotic effect, be of some influence in the lives of those who had learned it that way. But to say that this *might* occur is just to say that it is not logically impossible. To change behavior in that way is inefficient education.

Let us suppose, however contrary to likelihood, that we had a group of youngsters whom we had taught to recite on cue: P and 'P is true.' These youngsters, let us suppose further, had never learned the rules Play fair! and Don't be a bully! The behavior of these youngsters, we notice, is definitely changed following the purely verbal instruction, the incidence of cheating and bullying being clearly reduced. Would we then say that the youngsters had really grasped the meaning and truth of P? I think not. To know P, one must *see* its connections with simple moral rules and must *feel* its obliging force. This is commonplace. But if learning to say P merely *causes* a change in the behavior of A (a learner), then A has not learned the meaning and truth of P. Moral truth is the paradigm case for "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

To summarize: Teaching true statements in mathematics, history, science, and home economics is often preceded by the teaching of simple rules, thus maintaining compliance with Assumption 4. The teaching of moral truth is both like and unlike teaching other truths. It is like in that teaching moral rules precedes teaching moral truth. It is unlike in that knowing at least some of the rules is a necessary condition for learning the moral truth.

(2.) There is a second and more disturbing non-analogy between teaching moral truth and teaching of mathematical or scientific truth. We find it very difficult to specify the *teaching* of a method which establishes the truth of moral sentences. In the other fields of study mentioned, method of teaching and method of establishing truth are isomorphic if not identical. The method of mathematical proof is not at all so simple as it is sometimes represented, and there is obviously a great difference between the standards applied to a mathematical proof for mathematicians and a proof which satisfies the moral requirements of Assumption 4. But though the two are different, they are isomorphic. The same is true of the teaching of history, of science, of literary analysis, and also of skill subjects in respect to which we speak of know how rather than know that.

This isomorphism holds, I believe, despite differences in philosophical, i.e. metaphysical or epistemological, positions. Harry Broudy and Theodore Brameld may disagree on what it means to say that a sentence is true, e.g. in history. But each would insist that the method of teaching history exhibit those features which constitute the *form* of truth in history. In fact, we should have difficulty in understanding a man who claims (a) to have a distinctive theory for establishing the truth of a certain statement of type T and (b) that this theory makes no difference for a conception of method for teaching that statements of type T are true. We should say that (a) and (b) are contradictory or else that (a) presents an obnoxiously trivial sense of 'theory for establishing the truth of . . .'

But how are we to specify a teaching method for statements like P? We have already seen that the method of establishing the truth of P is, overly-simplified, a matter of reflecting on our obligations and on the kind of treatment other human beings can, by right, expect to receive from us. But, in contrast to mathematical proof, to experimental demonstration, to documentary criticism, even to problem solving procedures, reflection is not and cannot be method of teaching. What is the teacher to do? Is he to issue the patently futile command: "Reflect upon your obligations!"? Or is he to say: "Observe me. Notice I cup my palm to receive my chin, and thus I ponder the moral law. Do likewise."?

These suggestions for teaching are absurd. But notice that in the arguments supporting Assumption 1, essentially this method for establishing the truth of P, i.e. purely internal reflection, was used, at least used implicitly.

This conclusion, however, does not put me in the position of affirming the contradictory (a) and (b) just above. On the contrary, this theory of establishing the truth of moral statements does make a difference in our conception of teaching morality, too much difference in fact, for it seems to require a pedagogically impossible teaching method.

This conclusion has all too much evidence to support it in observing the contemporary scene. The movement away from the practice of giving serious attention to the moral issues of our times is quite evident in our most advanced "pilot" schools, those which set the course along which others follow. While there are many causes for this movement, the most compelling reason might be that in the absence of a clear cut method of teaching morality, the schools would depend upon the appearance of the occasional teaching genius in order to do it well, and experience has showed that done poorly, the teaching of morality is an exorbitant waste of educational effort.

There is, however, an obvious retort to all this: We do know a great deal about the teaching of morality in precisely the sense of stimulating reflection on moral truths and their meaning or lack of meaning in guiding the concrete choices people must learn to make. Good teachers can stalk this moment as a skillful hunter his prey: the moment when a student comes to see that all this talk is about *him*. From heroes and villains in fairy tales to the good guy and bad on the TV screen, from Scott's romances to *Huckleberry Finn*, from Teddy Roosevelt's brazen righteousness to Stalin's decline into paranoia, from Mother's solicitous (overly solicitous?) care to Father's alternation of blows and caresses—whenever the student has seen human action and motivation, there follows the patient teacher asking: "Why did he do that?" What should he have done? Now what do you really believe you would have done?"

This may not be a clear-cut method, but something like it makes our best guide to teaching moral truths to those younger than ourselves. It's not that we don't know anything about teaching moral truths; it's that how we *teach* moral truths to the young is not isomorphic with how we establish these truths for ourselves as adults. If I am in doubt about the truth of a moral sentence, should I read a novel or a case study from the family relations clinic? If I am in doubt about Q, I seek evidence concerning the consequences of acting on it, consequences that I can then judge by a moral truth, like P, about which I am *not* in doubt.

I do not *need* to go back to *Henry Esmond*, even though some such shaking of the sensibilities was likely a necessary antecedent to my adult reflection on moral problems. But more: it's inconceivable that I could find evidence for or against P in any poem, novel, or personal experience. This last point is the clincher for the fact of non-isomorphism between teaching and establishing moral truth. For any other sort of truth, the adult usually *need* not go back through the steps traversed in learning a truth in order to say he knows it. In the case of all truth other than moral truth, however, the adult knower can conceive that if he

should retrace the learning process, he *could* find evidence either to refute or confirm the matter he was considering. But this conditional, in a rather frightening way, is not true with respect to moral truth.

Now this makes it very difficult to see how we can teach P as a moral truth and maintain compliance with Assumption 4. We start out all right with teaching moral rules, for learning to follow certain rules is a logically necessary condition for learning what P means. But establishing the truth of P is a matter of reflection, which cannot be taught directly, though it may be developed indirectly by literary, historical, and socio-analytic studies. Thus our hesitation directly to treat moral questions in schools is quite understandable. Practically, we find it difficult—in teaching and especially in evaluation—to distinguish between the unjustifiable (and usually ineffective) indoctrination and the teaching of moral truth. But to stop there, i.e. with teaching moral rules, is neither morally nor professionally defensible for:

> Assumption 5: Education ought to free the learner from acting under the dual tyranny of his own unguided impulses and of socially imposed rules of conduct.

This is itself a purely moral statement. If you do not recognize that it is true, reflect on it!

Corollaries: 5. 1: Freedom from this dual tyranny (so far as it is achievable) we call reflective morality.

5. 2: Knowing moral truth, as contrasted with acting on moral rules, is a necessary condition for reflective morality.

No argument is necessary for 5. 1; it's a dictionary-type definition. But 5. 2 is doubly controversial: (Q) Is there a defensible distinction between having one's behavior influenced by a moral rule and knowing moral truth? and Q Is the latter rather than the former a necessary condition for reflective morality?

(The wording of (Q) really begs the question, of course. For surely there is a difference between having one's behavior influenced *by anything* and knowing a truth. It's more than a difference between knowing and doing; it's the difference between knowing and being done to. And surely, in at least some instances, having one's behavior influenced by moral rules is more a matter of being done to than it is of doing something.)

But the argument against 5. 2 is poorly represented in (Q). For 5. 2 contrasts "knowing moral truths" with "acting on moral rules." Now this latter expression means something other than having one's behavior influenced. Let us suppose that to say that one acts on a moral rule means:

a. That, at least usually, one acts as the rule dictates when appropriate conditions arise.
b. That when one does not so act, one shows remorse or extenuating circumstances.
c. That when asked why one acts in a certain way, one offers the rule as a reason or justification.
d. That one is willing to urge the rule on others and to defend the rightness of it. (This is to distinguish acting on a *moral* rule from acting on, say, a personal vow.)
e. That one despises action proscribed by the rule.
f. Etc. Etc.

Now if we mean *all* this by 'acting on a moral rule', how can we distinguish it from 'knowing a moral truth'? The answer is: we cannot. But neither can we mean *all* this by 'acting on a moral rule.' Specifically we can't mean c. Or if we do mean c, then we cannot mean by 'moral rules' such statements as 'Don't be a bully!'

Consider Mr. M. Of Mr. M it is widely and truly said that he is not a bully, that he acts on the rule 'Don't be a bully!' One day I watch, in fascination, as Mr. M's wallet is snatched by a rather young and clumsy pick-pocket. Mr. M pursues and soon catches the thief; he recovers his wallet, remonstrates gently with the culprit and then buys him a chocolate sundae. I inquire of Mr. M: "Why did you treat that hoodlum so kindly?" Mr. M answers: "Because don't be a bully!"

But, you say, that is a joke and no argument. Mr. M really meant that he believed in not being a bully, even toward awkward pickpockets. Just so. For Mr. M's case makes sense when he offers not a rule, but a *belief* which, when made fully explicit, will turn out to be a belief expressible in a sentence something like P. And so it will be so for any case.

M may, of course, be acting neither on a moral rule nor on a moral truth, but on a moral falsehood. He might have explained his action by

N: One ought to reward those who break the law.

Even though N is false, it is of the proper form. We can say Mr. M did the right thing for the wrong reason.

Again, like Gide's M. Lafcadio, Mr. M might act neither on a rule nor a moral truth, but purely on the impulse of the moment. He might explain his action by saying: "To overcome ennui." Even though from a motive like this (perhaps not a reason at all, but a cause of his action), Mr. M nonetheless acted rightly. One could even develop a theory of moral training that would have as its object the tendency to act rightly from ethically neutral motives. One could do this; it would be a bad theory of moral training for men, but perhaps a good one for house pets.

There is much more to be said in defense of 5.2, but *ars larga vita breve.* A full defense would involve carefully made distinctions among 'acting on a moral rule,' 'acting from a motive,' 'acting from a good (bad) motive,' and 'knowing a moral truth.' Without defense, we may say the following:

Definition O: An actor, A, knows a moral truth, p, implies:

A believes p
p is true
A has good reasons for his belief in p.

Where "A believes p" implies a,b,c,d,e above. If that is exactly what those who talk about 'acting on moral rules' mean by the expression, then 5. 2 is gratuitous. But it is unlikely that the meaning is identical. The Golden Rule, "Don't be a bully," and Kant's Categorical Imperatives are not *by chance* in the imperative form. And surely one may act on an imperative, in senses a, b, d, and e above without either offering the imperative *as* a reason for acting or offering reasons for the imperative. If it is objected that rules are not *necessarily* in the imperative

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IN DEFENSE OF VERBAL LEARNING

BY DAVID P. AUSUBEL

FEW PEDAGOGIC DEVICES IN OUR TIME HAVE BEEN REPUDIATED MORE UNEQUIVOCALLY BY EDUCATIONAL THEORISTS THAN THE METHOD OF VERBAL INSTRUCTION. It is fashionable in many quarters to characterize verbal learning as parrot-like recitation and rote memorization of isolated facts, and to dismiss it disdainfully as an archaic remnant of discredited educational tradition. In fact, quite apart from whatever intrinsic value they may possess, many educational innovations and movements of the past quarter-century—activity programs, project and discussion methods, various ways of maximizing non-verbal and manipulative experience in the classroom, emphasis on "self-discovery" and on learning for and by *problem-solving*—owe their origins and popularity to widespread dissatisfaction, with the techniques of verbal instruction. It is commonly accepted today, for example, (at least in the realm of educational theory) (a) that meaningful generalizations cannot be presented or "given" to the learner, but can only be acquired as a product of problem-solving activity (1); and (b) that all attempts to master verbal concepts and propositions are forms of empty verbalism unless the learner has recent prior experience with the realities to which these verbal constructs refer (1, 2).

Excellent reasons, of course, exist for the general disrepute into which verbal learning has fallen. The most obvious of these is that notwithstanding repeated policy declarations of educational organizations to the contrary, meaningful subject-matter is still presented to pupils in preponderantly rote fasion. Another less obvious but equally important reason stems from two serious shortcomings in modern learning theory. First, psychologists have tended to subsume many qualitatively different kinds of learning processes under a single explanatory model. As a result it has not always been sufficiently clear, for example, that such categorically different types of learning as problem-solving and the understanding of meaningfully presented verbal material have different objectives, and that conditions and instructional techniques facilitating one of these learning processes are not necessarily relevant or maximally efficient for the other. Second, in the absence of an appropriate theory of cognitive organization and of long-term learning and retention of large bodies of meaningful subject-matter, various explanatory principles (e.g., retroactive inhibition, stimulus generalization, response competition) have been uncritically extrapolated from laboratory findings on nonverbal or on short-term, fragmentary, and rote verbal learning. It is small wonder, therefore, that teachers nurtured on such theoretical fare have tended to perceive meaningful verbal materials as necessarily rote in character, and, in consequence, have either felt justified in using rote practices, or have summarily rejected verbal techniques as unsuitable for classroom instruction.

The present paper is concerned with the first of the two theoretical difficulties specified above. An attempt will be made to distinguish between "reception" and "discovery" learning, to sharpen the existing distinction between rote and

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meaningful learning, and to consider the distinctive role and relative importance of each of these types of learning in the total educational enterprise. It should then be clear that verbal learning *can* be genuinely meaningful without prior "discovery" or problem-solving activity, and that the weaknesses attributed to the method of verbal instruction do not inhere in the method itself, but are derived from either premature use of verbal techniques with cognitively immature pupils or from other serious misapplications. In another paper[1] I deal with the second theoretical problem, and propose a comprehensive theory of cognitive organization and classroom learning that has grown out of research on cognitive variables influencing the learning and retention of meaningfully presented verbal materials.

RECEPTION VERSUS DISCOVERY LEARNING

From the standpoint of promoting intellectual development, no theoretical concern is more relevant or pressing in the present state of our knowledge than the need for distinguishing clearly among the principal kinds of cognitive learning (i.e., rote and meaningful verbal learning, concept formation, and verbal and nonverbal problem-solving) that take place in the classroom. One significant way of differentiating among the latter types of classroom learning is to make two crucial process distinctions that cut across all of them—distinctions between reception and discovery learning and between rote and meaningful learning. The first distinction is especially important because most of the understandings that learners acquire both in and out of school are presented rather than discovered. And since most learning material is presented verbally, it is equally important to appreciate that verbal reception learning is not necessarily rote in character and can be meaningful without prior nonverbal or problem-solving experience.

In reception learning (rote or meaningful) the entire content of what is to be learned is presented to the learner in final form. The learning task does not involve any independent discovery on his part. He is only required to "internalize" the material (e.g., a list of nonsense syllables or paired associates; a poem or geometrical theorem) that is presented to him, i.e., make it available and functionally reproducible for future use. The essential feature of discovery learning (e.g., concept formation, rote or meaningful problem-solving), on the other hand, is that the principal content of what is to be learned is not given but must be independently discovered by the learner before he can internalize it. The distinctive and prior learning task, in other words, is to discover something—which of two maze alleys leads to the goal, the precise nature of a relationship between two variables, the common attributes of a number of diverse instances, etc. The first phase of discovery learning, therefore, involves a process quite different from that of reception learning. The learner must rearrange a given array of information, integrate it with existing cognitive structure,[2] and reorganize or transform the integrated combination in such a way as to create a desired end product or discover a missing means-end relationship. After this phase is completed, the discovered content is internalized just as in reception learning.

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[1]See D. P. Ausubel, "A Subsumption Theory of Meaningful Verbal Learning and Retention," *J. gen. psychol.*, in press.

[2]By "Cognitive structure" is simply meant a given individual's organization of knowledge.

The foregoing distinction, of course, is by no means absolute. Rote reception learning requires little or no discovery. Meaningful reception learning, however (see below), often involves more than the simple cataloguing of ready-made concepts or propositions within existing cognitive structure. Because of the variable nature of learners' backgrounds, presented ideas can seldom be apprehended in a completely meaningful fashion without some reconciliation with existing concepts and translation into a personal frame of reference. In a sense, therefore, the resulting meanings may be said to be "discovered." But since the substance of the actual learning task (e.g., the nature of a given relationship, the defining attributes of a concept) is presented rather than discovered, the extent of the discovery activity involved is limited to that required in integrating the new material into existing cognitive structure. This is naturally of a qualitatively different order than that involved in independent discovery. Theoretically also, discovery could be reduced to practically zero in meaningful reception learning if the presented material were appropriately programmed to fit each learner's experiential background and level of readiness.

An obvious corollary of the distinction between reception and discovery learning is that in the former instance repeated encounters with the learning material (apart from some possible changes in degree and precision of meaning) primarily increase the future availability of the material (i.e., the degree and duration of retention), whereas in the latter instance this same repetition gives rise to successive stages in a discovery process. Thus, the distinction between learning and forgetting is not nearly as great in reception as in discovery learning. Forgetting (i.e., a loss of availability) in reception learning merely constitutes a subsequent negative aspect of an original learning process which in essence required the learner to do little more than internalize and make material more available. In discovery learning, however, the later decrease in availability (forgetting) although also constituting a negative aspect of that terminal phase of the learning process during which availability is established and enhanced, has little in common with the prior and more distinctive phase of discovery.

It should be clear up to this point that reception and discovery learning are two quite different kinds of processes, and that much ideational material (e.g., concepts and generalizations) can be internalized and made available without prior independent discovery in the broader sense of the term. In the next section it will be shown that such generic verbal material may not only be meaningful without prior discovery (or nonverbal) experience, but may also be transferable and applicable to the solution of particular problems.

ROTE AND MEANINGFUL LEARNING

The distinction between rote and meaningful learning is frequently confused with the reception-discovery distinction discussed above. This confusion is partly responsible for the widespread but unwarranted belief that reception learning is invariably rote and that discovery learning is invariably meaningful. Actually, each distinction constitutes an entirely independent dimension of learning. Hence, both reception and discovery learning can each be rote or meaningful depending on the conditions under which learning occurs.

By "meaningful learning" we also refer primarily to a distinctive kind of learning process, and only secondarily to a meaningful learning outcome—attainment of meaning—that necessarily reflects the completion of such a process. Meaningful learning as a process presupposes, in turn, *both* that the learner employs a meaningful learning set and that the material he learns is potentially meaningful to him. Thus, regardless of how much potential meaning may inhere in a given proposition, if the learner's intention is to memorize it verbatim, i.e., as a series of arbitrarily related words, both the learning process and the learning outcome must necessarily be rote and meaningless. And conversely, no matter how meaningful the learner's set may be, neither the process nor outcome of learning can possibly be meaningful if the learning task itself is devoid of potential meaning.

Meaningful Learning Set. In meaningful learning the learner has a set to relate substantive (as opposed to verbatim) aspects of new concepts, information or situations to relevant components of existing cognitive structure in various ways that make possible the incorporation of derivative, elaborative, descriptive, supportive, qualifying or representational relationships. Depending on the nature of the learning task (i.e., reception or discovery) the set may be either to discover or merely to apprehend and incorporate such relationships. In rote learning, on the other hand, the learner's set is to discover a solution to a problem, or to internalize material verbatim, as a discrete and isolated end in itself. Such learning obviously does not occur in a cognitive vacuum. The material *is* related to cognitive structure, but not in a substantive, nonarbitrary fashion permitting incorporation of one of the relationships specified above. Where discovery learning is involved the distinction between rote and meaningful learning corresponds to that between "trial and error" and insightful problem solving.

Potentially Meaningful Material. A meaningful set or approach to learning, as already pointed out, only eventuates in a meaningful learning process and outcome provided that the learning material (task) itself is *potentially* meaningful. Insistence on the qualifying adjective "potential" in this instance is more than mere academic hair-splitting. If the learning material were simply considered meaningful, the learning process (apprehending the meaning and making it functionally more available) would be completely superfluous; the objective of learning would obviously be already accomplished, by definition, before any learning was ever attempted and irrespective of the type of learning set employed. It is true that certain component elements of a current learning task as, for example, the individual words of a new geometrical theorem, may already be meaningful to the learner; but it is the meaning of the relational proposition as a whole which is the object of learning in this situation—not the individual meanings of its component elements. Thus, although the term "meaningful learning" necessarily implies the use of potentially meaningful learning tasks, it does not imply that the learning of meaningful as opposed to rote material is the distinctive feature of meaningful learning. Meaningful material may be perceived and reacted to meaningfully, but cannot possibly constitute a learning task in as much as the very term "meaningful" connotes that the object of learning was previously consummated.

Two important criteria determine whether new learning material is potentially meaningful. The first criterion—nonarbitrary relatability to relevant concepts

in cognitive structure, in the various ways specified above—is a property of the material itself. New material is *not* potentially meaningful if either the total learning task (e.g., a particular order of nonsense syllables, a particular sequence of paired adjectives, a scrambled sentence) or the basic unit of the learning task (a particular pair of adjectives) is only relatable to such concepts on a purely arbitrary basis. This criterion of potential meaningfulness applies solely to the current learning task itself—not to any of its structural elements which may already be meaningful, such as the component letters of a nonsense syllable,[3] each member of an adjective pair, or the component words of a scrambled sentence. The presence of meaningful component words, for example, no more detracts from the lack of potential meaningfulness in the task of learning the correct sequence of jumbled words in a scrambled sentence than it adds to potential meaningfulness in the task of learning the meaning of a geometrical theorem. In both instances the meaningful components, although structurally part of the learning material, do not constitute part of the learning task in a functional sense.[4]

Arbitrariness, of course, is a relative term. It is true, for example, that most verbal symbols represent the objects and concepts to which they refer on a purely arbitrary basis. Nevertheless, since such symbols are relatable to and incorporable by their referents as representational equivalents, the association of new words with concrete images or abstract concepts in cognitive structure meets our definition of a potentially meaningful learning task. The newly established relationship of representational equivalence in cognitive structure is predicated on a much less arbitrary basis than sequential associations among a randomly arranged list of words, numbers, nonsense syllables, or paired adjectives. The type of cognitive process involved in representational learning is basic to the acquisition of language or of any system of symbols. In fact it is only by combining these simple representational meanings in various ways that it is possible to obtain less arbitrary relational propositions which possess greater potential meaningfulness.[5]

The second important criterion determining whether learning material is potentially meaningful—its relatability to the *particular* cognitive structure of a particular learner—is more properly a characteristic of the learner than of the material per se. Phenomenologically, meaningfulness is an individual matter. Hence for meaningful learning to occur in fact, it is not sufficient that the new material simply be relatable to relevant ideas in the abstract sense of the term.

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[3]A particular nonsense syllable as a whole may also be more or less meaningful apart from its component letters in so far as it resembles and hence evokes associations with actual words. This is a type of derived meaning based on linguistic similarity.

[4]The fact that meaningful components do not constitute the object of learning or a criterion of potential meaningfulness does not mean that they have no influence whatsoever on the current learning task. It is much easier, for example, to learn arbitrary (rote) sequential associations between a series of meaningful words or relatively "meaningful" nonsense syllables than between a series of relatively "meaningless" nonsense syllables. It is also obvious that before one can learn the meaning of a geometrical theorem, one must first know the meanings of its component words. The only point that is being made here is that nonarbitrary relatability of the actual learning task to cognitive structure rather than the presence of meaningful components is the determining factor in deciding whether learning material is or is not potentially meaningful.

[5]On the grounds of both the verbatim character of the learning task and the relative arbitrariness of the latter's relatability to cognitive structure, the learning of representational equivalents may be considered the simplest type of meaningful learning. It is intermediate in process between rote learning and the more complex types of meaningful learning.

The cognitive structure of the particular learner must include the requisite intellectual capacities, ideational content, and experiential background. It is on this basis that the potential meaningfulness of learning material varies with such factors as age, intelligence, occupation, cultural membership, etc.

The concept of meaningfulness implied here (i.e., the outcome of a learning process in which the learner attempts to relate nonarbitrarily to his cognitive structure a learning task which is potentially relatable in this fashion) departs from such classical behavioristic criteria of meaningfulness as the familiarity of a word or nonsense syllable and the number of associations it evokes. These criteria are regarded as correlates of the *degree* of meaningfulness rather than as distinguishing characteristics of meaningfulness per se. The strength of the association between a representational symbol and the object or concept to which it refers (and hence the availability of the symbol and its degree of meaningfulness) are functions of the frequency and variety of contexts in which the symbol is used or encountered. A highly meaningful symbol, therefore, tends both to be subjectively more familiar and to evoke more associations than a less meaningful symbol.

As long as the set and content conditions of meaningful learning are satisfied, the outcome should be meaningful and the advantages of meaningful learning (economy of learning effort, more stable retention and greater transferability) should accrue irrespective of whether the content to be internalized is presented or discovered, verbal or nonverbal. It now remains to be considered to what extent the potential meaningfulness of learning material in these various forms is influenced by developmental factors.

DEVELOPMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

In the absence of prior discovery and nonverbal experience, children approximately below the age of twelve[6] tend to find directly presented verbal constructs of any complexity unrelatable to existing cognitive structure, and hence devoid of potential meaning (6, 7, 8). Until they consolidate a sufficiently large working body of key verbal concepts based on appropriate experience, and until they become capable of directly interrelating abstract propositions without reference to specific instances, children are closely restricted to basic empirical data in the kinds of logical operations they can relate to cognitive structure. Thus in performing "class inclusive and relational operations," they generally require direct experience with the actual diverse instances underlying a concept or generalization as well as proximate, nonverbal (rather than representational) contact with the objects or situations involved (5). During the elementary school years directly presented and verbal materials are too distantly removed from empirical experience to be relatable to cognitive structure.

[6]The designation of age level here is solely for purposes of convenience, and is not meant to imply that the change is abrupt or that overlapping of learning processes does not occur between children in adjacent age groups. Nor does it imply that the transition is reflective of "internal ripening" and hence takes place invariably at this age. The precise age *around* which the transition occurs depends on the nature of the child's prior experience and education and on such individual differences as IQ. The only necessary assumption, therefore, is that a gradual qualitative transition in mode of learning takes place as children reach a certain level of cognitive sophistication, and that the age at which this change is most salient varies with both individual capacity and experience.

This does not necessarily mean, however, that actual discovery is required before meaningfulness is possible. As long as direct, nonverbal contact with the data is an integral part of the learning situation, derivative verbal concepts and generalizations may be meaningfully apprehended even though they are presented rather than discovered. But since discovery probably enhances both retention and transferability (and also constitutes in this instance a built-in test of understanding), and since the time-consuming empirical aspect of the learning must take place anyway, it is usually preferable in these circumstances to encourage pupils independently to complete the final step of drawing inferences from data.

Beginning in the junior high school period, however, and becoming increasingly more true thereafter, prior empirical and nonverbal experience is no longer essential before concepts and generalizations become potentially meaningful. It is true, of course, that the pupil's established verbal concepts must have been preceded sometime in the past by direct, nonverbal experience with the data from which they were abstracted; but once these concepts are sufficiently well consolidated and the pupil is able to manipulate and interrelate them adequately on a purely abstract basis, new learning material is logically relatable to cognitive structure without any direct or nonverbal *current* reference to empirical data. The adolescent, unlike the typical elementary school child is capable of performing logical operations on verbal propositions (5). His concepts and generalizations, therefore, tend more to be second-order constructs derived from relationships between previously established verbal abstractions already one step removed from the data itself (5). And since he is freed from dependence on direct, nonverbal contact with data in independently discovering meaningful new concepts and generalizations, he is obviously also liberated from this same dependence in the much less rigorous task of merely apprehending these constructs meaningfully when they are verbally presented to him.

RECEPTION VERSUS DISCOVERY LEARNING IN CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

Formal education has two principal objectives with respect to the cognitive development of the individual: (a) the long-term acquisition and retention of stable, organized, and extensive bodies of meaningful, generalizable knowledge, and (b) growth in the ability to use this knowledge in the solution of particular problems, including those problems which, when solved, augment the learner's original store of knowledge. These objectives, therefore, although related and mutually supportive, do not overlap completely. In the first place, quite apart from its usefulness in problem-solving, the acquisition of knowledge is a legitimate objective in its own right. Second, the goal of most kinds and instances of problem-solving activity is to facilitate everyday living and decision-making—not to discover knowledge that is of sufficient general significance to merit permanent incorporation into cognitive structure. The inductive derivation of concepts and generalizations from diverse instances is an exception to this statement, but is only a conspicuous feature of concept attainment during childhood (before a really large quantity of subject matter is incorporated). For the most part, in the formal education of the individual, the educating agency merely transmits ready-made concepts, categorical schemata and relational propositions.

Many educators contend, however, that the use of problem-solving techniques beyond the elementary school years should neither be limited to the application of knowledge to particular problems of transitory significance, nor constitute the exclusive methodological prerogative of scientists and scholars engaged in pushing forward the frontiers of knowledge. They maintain that these techniques should be used generally, in preference to verbal reception learning, in acquiring the substantive *content* of subject-matter—in much the same manner as the method of inductive derivation of concepts and generalizations during childhood. Their reasoning is essentially based on the following premises: (a) that abstract propositions are forms of glib verbalism unless the learner constructs them directly out of his own nonverbal, empirical experience (1, p. 112); that "generalizations are products of problem-solving . . . and are attainable in no other way" (1, p. 119); and (b) that discovery methods enhance the learning, retention, and transferability of principles.

It has already been shown, however, that although the first premise (apart from the gratuitous assumption about the indispensability of independent problem-solving for generalization) is warranted during the elementary school years, it does not validly apply to learning that takes place during and after adolescence. Students do not independently have to solve the intellectual problems they perceive in the content of learning materials in order for the solutions to have meaning and transferability for them. The deference to authority implied in accepting already discovered relationships has been condemned out of all reason. If students were required independently to validate every proposition presented by their instructors before accepting it, they would never progress beyond the rudiments of any discipline. We can only ask that established knowledge be presented to them as rationally and non-arbitrarily as possible, and that they accept it tentatively and critically as only the best available approximation of the "truth".

The second premise regarding the superior learning, retention, and transferability of material learned by the discovery method needs to be examined more closely. Although experimental findings tend to be inconclusive because of the confounding of variables (e.g., failure to hold constant the rote-meaningful and the inductive-deductive dimensions while varying the reception-discovery factor), it is plausible to suppose that the greater effort and vividness associated with independent discovery lead to somewhat greater learning and retention. One might expect the advantages conferred by discovery techniques to be even greater with respect to transferability, since the experience gained in formulating a generalization from diverse instances, for example, obviously facilitates the solution of problems involving this generalization. None of these advantages, however, seems sufficiently impressive to compensate for the unalterable fact that empirical problem-solving methods of instruction are incomparably more time-consuming than the method of verbal presentation. Problem-solving, manipulative, nonverbal, and inductive procedures undoubtedly have their place in promoting and reinforcing particular understandings that are difficult to grasp on a purely verbal basis (especially in fields such as mathematics with its own distinctive language), and in testing for the meaningfulness of verbal receptino learning. Feasibility as a *primary* technique for transmitting the substantive content of an intellectual or scientific discipline, however, is quite another matter.

The development of problem-solving ability is, of course, a legitimate and significant educational objective in its own right. Hence it is highly defensible to utilize a certain proportion of classroom time in developing appreciation of and facility in the use of scientific methods of inquiry and of other empirical, inductive and deductive problem-solving procedures. But this is a far cry from advocating (a) that the presentation of scientific and other subject-matter should be organized in whole or part along the lines of inductive discovery, and should require nonverbal understanding and application of principles before the latter are introduced verbally (3, 4); and (b) that the enhancement of problem-solving ability is the major function of the school. To acquire facility in problem-solving and scientific method it is not necessary for learners to rediscover every principle in the syllabus. Since problem-solving ability, is itself transferable, at least within a given subject-matter field, facility gained in independently formulating and applying one generalization is transferable to other problem areas in the same discipline. Furthermore, overemphasis on developing problem-solving ability would untimately defeat its own ends. It would leave students with insufficient time in which to learn the content of a discipline; and hence, despite their adeptness at problem-solving, they would be unable to solve simple problems involving the application of such content.

Aptitude in problem-solving also involves a much different pattern of abilities than those required for understanding and retaining abstract ideas. The ability to solve problems calls for qualities (e.g., flexibility, resourcefulness, improvising skill, originality, problem sensitivity, venturesomeness) that are less generously distributed in the population of learners than the ability to comprehend verbally presented materials. Many of these qualities also cannot be taught effectively. Although appropriate pedagogic procedures can improve problem-solving ability, relatively few good problem-solvers can be trained in comparison with the number of persons who can acquire a meaningful grasp of various subject-matter fields. Thus, to ignore the latter individuals and concentrate solely on producing talented problem-solvers would be educationally indefensible. Because of the different pattern of abilities involved, we also cannot assume that the learner who is unable to solve a given set of problems *necessarily* does not understand but has merely memorized the principles tested by these problems. Unfortunately, however, there is no other feasible way of testing for meaningfulness.

The method of verbal presentation does not necessarily constitute a deductive approach to instruction. For one thing it is entirely possible to follow an inductive order of presentation. But even when principles are presented first, the deductive designation is often inappropriate since much of the following material is correlative rather than supportive or illustrative in nature, and provides as much of a basis for deriving more inclusive new generalizations as for deriving subsidiary principles and solving subsidiary problems.

Misuses of the method of verbal learning are so well-known that only the following more flagrant practices need be mentioned: premature use of verbal techniques with cognitively immature pupils; arbitrary, cook book presentation of unrelated facts without any organizing or explanatory principles; failure to integrate new learning tasks with previously presented materials; and the use of evaluation procedures that merely measure ability to recognize discrete facts

or to reproduce ideas in the same words or in the identical context as originally encountered. Although it is entirely proper to caution teachers against these frequent misuses of verbal learning, it is not legitimate to represent them as inherent in the method itself. An approach to instruction which on logical and psychological grounds appears appropriate and efficient should not be discarded as unworkable simply because it is subject to misuse. It would seem more reasonable to guard against the more common misapplications, and to relate the method to relevant theoretical principles and research findings that actually deal with long-term learning and retention of large bodies of meaningful, verbally presented materials. The latter research, of course, still remains to be conducted. But until it is, the efficient programming of verbal learning is impossible, and devices such as "teaching machines" can do no better than present automatically, with somewhat more immediate reinforcement, the same materials currently presented by teachers.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Much of the opprobrium currently attached to verbal learning stems from failure to distinguish between "reception" and "discovery" learning and to appreciate the underlying basis of meaningfulness. It is widely accepted, for example, that verbal learning is invariably rote (glib verbalism) unless preceded by recent nonverbal problem-solving experience.

Most classroom instruction is organized along the lines of reception learning. Independent discovery of what is to be learned is not required: the content of the learning task is typically presented, and only has to be internalized and made available (functionally reproducible) for future use. This learning is meaningful provided that the learner has a set to relate the learning material to cognitive structure, and that the material is in fact logically (non-arbitrarily) relatable thereto. Only approximately before the age of twelve is direct empirical and nonverbal contact with data necessary for relatability to cognitive structure (i.e., for potential meaningfulness). At no stage does the learner have to discover principles independently in order to be able to understand and use them meaningfully.

Thus, after the elementary school years, verbal reception learning constitutes the most efficient method of meaningfully assimilating the substantive content of a discipline. Problem-solving methods are too time-consuming to accomplish this objective efficiently, but are useful for communicating certain insights and for measuring the meaningfulness of reception learning. The promotion of problem-solving ability, however, is a legitimate educational objective in its own right as long as it is not overemphasized.

The method of verbal reception learning will be restored to its rightful place in classroom instruction only when it is related to relevant but still-to-be-conducted research on the nature and conditions of long-term meaningful learning of large bodies of verbally presented material.

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TWO QUESTIONS ABOUT THE TEACHING OF MORAL VALUES

(*Continued from page 14*)

form, the point is valid. But when taken out of the imperative form, a re-statement of a rule becomes *either* a moral sentence like P and thus true or false, or else, in translation, it becomes a mere statement of administrative regulation, "Barnard girls don't wear shorts to class."

(The argument just above is no direct attack against the not uncommon view that moral training is like teaching the rules of a game. Of course it is like that; but it is also subtly, and very importantly different. Once the distinction between 'acting on a moral rule' and 'knowing a moral truth' is granted, then clearly the latter, not the former, is the necessary condition for reflective morality.)

Assumption 6: Moral education ought to produce in learners a knowledge of moral truth and habits of reflecting and acting on moral truth.

If Assumption 4 and 5 with the corollaries of the latter, have been granted, Assumption 6 follows without argument. I can add only that the inherent reasonableness of 6 adds a certain plausibility to the more controversial premises which preceded it.

PART C: CONCLUSION

Question I: "What relation is there between teaching moral truth and training in moral behavior?" The relation is not, we have seen, one of identity. There is a logical as well as psychological primacy in rule-directed (moral) behavior, though this cannot be the final goal of moral education. But developmentally, how does the one grow out of the other? Pedagogically, how can this process best be fostered and promoted? The analysis in the body of this paper has demonstrated that these last two questions are not rhetorical but are rather the central issues to be resolved in a theory of moral education.

Question II: What relation is there between learning reflective morality and learning to participate in the higher, non-moral values of life?

I have a definite feeling that this is a *very* important question, but I haven't the wit to analyze it.

THE HUMANITIES AND THE CURRICULUM

BY HOWARD L. PARSONS

A. Difficulties in the Traditional Definition and Classification of the Humanities

1. The term "Humanities" was conceived and developed by Cicero and others long before the rise of modern science and was originally designed to distinguish those activities in man which mark him off from the rest of nature, from God and the supernatural, and from all that is thought to be inhuman and inhumane—the ungentlemanly, the uncultivated, the unreflectively vocational, the barbaric or uncivilized. The Humanities meant the study and practice of what is human. These meanings and distinctions are worth keeping in mind and preserving.

   But the Natural and Social Sciences are clearly also, at least in part, studied of what is human. They are moveover human enterprises which bind men together and humanize them both in the rational and social character of their procedures and in their effects. Similarly, studies in Religion, at least to the modern mind, belong in part in the Humanities, for the proper study of religion is not only God but also mankind.

   Likewise, Psychology, which has ties to the natural order because its subject, man, does, and History, which deals with man and society in time—indeed, all the Social Sciences—might properly be classified as disciplines in the Humanities.

2. The distinction between the Humanities and the Sciences is sometimes made on the ground of methods. The Sciences are said to be abstract, precise, systematic, and mathematical; the Humanities, concrete, imaginative, intuitive, and sensuous. Yet the Sciences frequently employ intuition in the discovery of hypotheses, and increasingly use is made of statistics in understanding some problem in the Humanities. If a distinction is made on this ground, it apparently must be made as one of emphasis or degree. Both the Sciences and the Humanities are human activities. The same is true when it is said (as at Oberlin) that the Sciences are descriptive and the Humanities prescriptive. There is a glint of truth in this contrast, but if fastened on, it obstructs, the light that is common to both.

3. The distinction is sometimes put as one of Art or Skill vs. Principles. But an analysis of any art would reveal this dichotomy to be spurious. More important, both the Sciences and the Humanities are *studies* of certain practices and their results, as well as efforts by teachers to help students become practitioners of such practices. (This point will be discussed in detail later.)

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B. REVISED DEFINITION OF THE HUMANITIES

The Humanities may be taken to be comprised by those studies of what makes man distinctively human. And what makes man distinctively human is the formation and transformation of *meanings*.

The Humanities therefore include consideration of the processes as well as the products of meaning-formation. They concern themselves with particular expressions of meaning and with the general principles inherent in them. And the student of the Humanities will himself experience and begin to master the same kind of processes and produce the same kind of products as those he studies. He himself will become humanized as he participates in the processes of understanding and appreciating expressions of humanity in others.

This definition of the Humanities has two advantages:

1. While, as indicated above, it is difficult to make a sharp distinction between the practice of the Sciences and the practices of the Arts, we can distinguish the Natural Sciences, the Humanities (as traditionally conceived), the Social Sciences, Religion, and Philosophy on the basis of *the types of meaning and the human activities which they take as their respective subject matters*.

2. This definition can enable us to see that the common thread running through all human activity and hence through all the disciplines is *meaning*, with its vehicle, *language*. This is what is distinctively *human*. In a college that takes as its motto, "Truth and Moral Excellence", and that aims to liberate the student from ignorance, apathy, irresponsibility, and incompetence in living, the emphasis on the humanistic approach in this broad sense becomes especially pertinent and important. For the emphasis is on the *humanizing* of students and faculty, and all the studies engaged in, all the skills acquired, all the knowledge learned, in the Natural and Social Sciences, are properly instrumental to the end of *humanization*. No one discipline has or ought to have a monopoly on this process, although all have forgotten or deserted its development to some degree, and although some disciplines, traditionally called the Humanities, and the Social Sciences, are perhaps more directly concerned with it than are the others.

C. THE PROBLEM

The problem is to re-conceive the whole curriculum and in particular the curriculum in the Humanities so that the disciplines now called the Humanities can be given their proper place and role and value along with the other disciplines. Or, if one wishes to discuss whether these subjects as "Humanities" should or should not be required, one must discuss also what they are and how they are related to other subjects in the required curriculum. To do this one needs a scheme of interpretation and criticism, and to that we now turn.

D. A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR INTERPRETING THE ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES

1. The Concept of Meaning

a. The Nature of Meaning

The central concept in the definition of the Humanities given above is *meaning*. A meaning may be defined as what is comprised by a sign (or symbol), referent, and interpreter, all related to one another in the process called "signification." Meaning as here defined is behavioral, and involves, in the case of latent meaning, dispositions to respond to signs, i.e., to things that serve as substitute stimuli.

It is not claimed that this concept of meaning tells all there is to know about the complex phenomenon of meaning, or that other concepts would not be useful. What is insisted on is the centrality of meaning in human life and therefore in our understanding and teaching of the subject matter of the Humanities.

b. The Importance of Meaning

While every meaning is uniquely individualized in the behavior of some person, all meanings are characteristically social in origin and function. Differentiated and integrated, meanings characterize the "mind" of the human being, though the human being at any given moment is more than the manifest or accumulated meanings he displays. He is a dynamic process wherein acquired meanings are transformed and new meanings are created. Meanings emerge and take on form and integration as certain favorable conditions obtain—experimental interaction with the non-human world, free and disciplined interaction with other minds, trained attention to the symbolic expressions of past generations and distant cultures, creative solitude, etc. All that is distinctively human—personality, society, history, culture—arises and is maintained through the formation and transformation of meanings.

c. Kinds of Meaning

There are many kinds of meaning and numerous uses to which meanings may be put. For convenience we may single out four modes of meaning, or dimensions:

Designative
Appraisive
Prescriptive
Formative

There are probably other dimensions, and no doubt other schemes of interpretation for ordering them.[1]

These modes or dimensions of meaning are ways of approaching or signifying the factors in a complete human experience. Such an experience involves knowledge of the environment toward which

[1]The classification above is taken from Charles Morris, *Signs, Language and Behavior* (New York, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1946), Chap. III.

behavior directs itself; receptivity to that environment and selective attention with respect to the needs of the actor; action toward it; and organization of such knowledge, evaluation, and action.[2]

E. THE DISCIPLINES DEFINED AND CLASSIFIED

The behavior of the individual human being exhibits four phases, and each receives a certain emphasis in the context of the others. Thus there have grown up characteristic human activities and institutions around certain phases, and characteristic studies of these activities. This does not mean that human living has been sundered into four separated activites, each the exclusive possessor of one phase. It means, rather, that every human activity, so far as it is a full unit of activity or "experience" as we define it, is likely to *emphasize* some one phase of the four and subordinate the others. This emphasis is achieved and expressed by the symbolic mode that is dominant. We may represent all this in the following scheme:

Referent	*Symbolic Mode Dominant*	*Phase of Behavior*	*Institutionalized Human Activity*	*Study of the Activity*
Some portion of the environs	Designative	Knowledge	Proto-Science and Science	Study of Science
Qualities of things sought or avoided (values)	Appraisive	Evaluation	Art	Study of Art (Humanities)
Values prescribed or prohibited (commitments)	Prescriptive	Action	Morals, Religion	Study of commitments
Form	Formative	Organization	Abstract Thinking (Induction, Deduction)	Study of Formal Systematization (Logic, Foundations of Math, Semantics)
Further, such individual human activity occurs in two contexts—that of Society and History, and that of the Universe, and the individual in endeavoring to adapt his behavior to those contexts unfolds further phases or aspects of action, with characteristic activities, thus:				
Society		Socialization	Family, Initiation, Courtship, etc.	Social Studies
Universe[3]		Ultimate Orientation	Basic beliefs, practices of worship	Studies of ultimate orientations (Speculative Philosophy, Theology)

[2]Compare the categories of the Hindu *Gita*, Plato, Peirce, Freud, G. H. Mead, Parsons-Shils-Bales, C. W. Morris, and others.

[3]The "universe" is sometimes called "nature", and as such has been taken in the past as the subject of the Natural Sciences. Today most of the Natural Sciences are specialized, consider only a very select segment of the Universe, and only rarely deal with its most general laws and processes, and their ultimate significance.

F. The Sciences and the Humanities

In the right-hand column of the scheme above, every "Study" studies its respective activity, but the "studies" are not thereby to be thought of as differing in the same ways in which their subject matters differ. Every Study, to be sure, will display the four modes of meaning; it will be a mixture of designative, appraisive, prescriptive, and formative components. It is therefore not only invidious but also erroneous to separate the Sciences from the Humanities at this point by saying that the Sciences deal with facts and the Humanities with values and each has its own language completely incommensurable with the other's.

As we have stated, scientific *activity* is different from artistic or moral *activity*, but the difference is one of *emphasis* in what is attended to and what symbolic modes are used to relate the person to that. When it comes to the level of study—analysis and synthesis of the elements in a given activity—the differences are less pronounced. A scholarly study of Shakespeare's plays, of the Bible, or of the human group, while less quantitative than Science or the Study of Science, may be no less cognitive and reliable than the studies in or of Science. Such humanistic studies tend to contain a higher degree of implicit evaluation or appraisal and prescription than the studies in or of Science (because their subject matter is predominantly appraisive and prescriptive) but that tendency need not bar them from knowledge via designative language. Surely one of the aims of the Humanities is reliable *knowledge* of the subject matter and not *just* utterances in the appraisive and prescriptive modes.

G. The Languages, Materials, and Unifying Principles of the Disciplines

The scheme given is artificial and can be misleading if it is not remembered that every human activity that seems to be recurrent in human cultures and has become institutionalized—science and its crude predecessors in savage societies; art, morals and religion; abstract thinking (which ordinarily occurs in connection with some other activity); institutions of acculturation; and institutions by which the basic beliefs of individuals and groups are expressed—is not divided off from other human activities, isolated and unique.

Instead, every human activity of the types mentioned is, in its own way, an effort on the part of the human being to relate himself to his world or some aspect of it, to find out about it, to take some stand or attitude toward it, to act upon it and have it act on him accordingly, to organize these attitudes and actions, and to do all this in the context of his society and his universe.

Science, art, morals, and abstract thought do not together make up a full human act. Instead, each, with its own symbols, its own selected events and concepts, and its own methods, is a complete act in itself. Each in its own way is an endeavor to answer these questions:

1. What is real?
   How do I know it? (And what are the criteria of truth?)
2. How do I evaluate it?
3. What ought I to do about it?

4. What are the organizing principles for these activities?
5. Who am I and how do I become socialized?
6. What is ultimately real?
   —How do I know it?
   —How do I evaluate it?
   —What ought I to do about it?
   —What are the organizing principles for these activities?

Question 6 is simply the first question repeated at the level of the general and universal rather than the specialized and local. It is implicit in question 1 in the sense that if any man pursues local and specialized inquiry into what is real, and pursues it far enough, he will find his questions transformed into those under question 6.

These six questions then are concerned with the unifying principles which are represented in the third column in the scheme below. (As will be indicated in a minute, there are at least two ways in which unification may be achieved in a discipline, the critical or normative, and the synoptic.)

The disciplines differ in their languages, their materials, and their methods, though even in these they have some features in common. But they are alike in that they all pertain to human activities that are more or less unconsciously bent on answering the 6 questions stated. The reason for having disciplines that correspond to human institutions (e.g., the discipline of biology that corresponds in its specialized branches to practices of eating, sanitation, healing, etc.) is that they elucidate the theory of the practices, compare the two, and by revising the theory in the light of discrepancies in practice, or in the light of some human ideal, improve the practice. Now the theory is the systematic answer to the generic questions. Therefore, if students are to be anything more than blind practitioners, somnabulistic followers of the *status quo*, barbarians in the Ciceronian sense—they must be awakened and civilized, liberated and humanized, by a persistent and systematic consideration of the big questions.

It is an essential if not primary function of the disciplines in a liberal arts setting to raise such questions, and, in raising them, to raise their hearers from the dead. These questions, which nestle so unobtrusively near the roots of every field and forest of thought, must be lifted into the open air and examined. They lie not merely at the base of thought; they are the form which guides the whole activity. They are the things that human activities, in all their diversity and obscurity, are about. In doing this the disciplines can help men to recover the natural unity which underlies all human activity but which has been arbitrarily divided in modern times by the division of human labor into specialized fields, so that both artists, scientists, moralists, and persons in religion draw back from asking the questions which in the past have constituted the *raison d'etre* of their activities. Nothing human to them was alien because everything human had something generic and basic about its aim, and therefore ought to appeal and did appeal to every man, whatever his specialty.

To be useful in curriculum-building and teaching, the scheme below need not presuppose a single set of final answers to the 6 questions that apply across the board or even in one discipline. What will appear more probable to most is

that each discipline (of the 6) has its own ways of formulating and emphasizing the questions and its own special set of answers—not to mention the diversity among students within a single discipline. But the utility of the teacher's and student's asking of the questions in all the disciplines is a way of focussing attention on what education, as liberalizing, seems to be all about, and of recovering a unity in the educational process (and hence, perhaps, in culture) which is all but fatally fractured.

What is called for is not a punch press of oppressive mold hovering over every discipline but an effort on the part of each to find what at the basis of his inquiry men are and have been up to, and, in the process, perhaps, to find out what men generally have been up to—in short, to find out what he shares with other inquirers, past and present, who hope to humanize themselves a little in the process of inquiry.

It will be found, I think, that what the scientist regards as reality will be different from what the artist considers real; at least, so it will seem, and we all know appearances can be deceiving. And so it will be with value, commitment, and appropriate form. But the differences in definitions and perspectives are not disastrous so long as they can be mutually understood and distinguished and given a place in a scheme which can order them in relation one to another. For they cannot really be appreciated as unique and individual, even by those who hold them, unless they are ordered in relation to what is generic.

In the scheme below, what is meant by "Unifying Principles" is the products of both critical and synoptic activity. "Criticism" here imports holding something up to a standard or norm and judging it. Every discipline has its own norms by which it guides its activity and judges the results thereof. Clarity, precision, system are some of the norms of scientific activity. Vividness, subtlety, and richness of quality are some of the norms of artistic activity. These norms have to do with (among other things) reality, truth, value, commitment, form, man and society, and the ultimates. True, explicit consideration of them may not occupy the foreground of scientific or artistic activity, or studies of those activities. Yet analysis of the obvious norms will reveal that they rest on these more general and deeply hidden norms which are presupposed and without which the particular norms could not work or the activity go forward.

"Synoptic activity" goes beyond the unifying norms or principles given in the discipline and endeavors to see their relation to norms in other disciplines. Criticism goes down, synopsis out; both are requisite to sound unification in a discipline. Both unify, and as such are continuous with one another. Unity of experience for a person always begins where he is, in the midst of some practice. It proceeds through clarification of the norms implicit in traditional practice. It then endeavors to revise those norms in a way that makes theoretical and practical sense—in a way that conforms to the sound norms of any theory and practice. Then synopsis carries criticism beyond the bounds of a speciality to connect its norms with the norms in other specialities and with the generic principles of all human experience.

It will be noted that in the scheme that follows every one of the disciplines is distinguished by a distinctive language. This is a fact of paramount importance.

It is not enough to talk about unification of the student or of the disciplines through discussion of common issues or common principles, as essential as they are. The student must have some mastery of the tools, the languages, with which he is working. Such mastery entails that he be able to use and understand the structure and function of the various languages—mathematics, the language of humanistic criticism, and so forth. To do this adequately, he must have an overview of languages, that is, a grasp of the generic features of all languages. He must know semantics as a general theory of language, or better, of *meaning*. This kind of training is absent from most curricula. But since to unlock the secrets of meaning is to unlock humanity, the man who has no key is himself locked in the prison of meanings which he and his cultures continue to build about him.

	Language	*Material*	*Unifying Principles*
Studies of Sciences and Nature	Ordinary language, specialized terms, mathematics	Phenomena of nature and descriptions and concepts of the natural sciences	Matter, life, evolution; consistency, truth, and utility of concepts
Studies of Art	Ordinary language, specialized language of criticism	Artistic processes and works of art	Quality, form, unity, variety, etc.; effectiveness in communicating of quality
Studies of Commitments	Ordinary language, specialized language of criticism	Acts of commitment guided by moral concepts	Good, right, virtue, duty, etc.; effectiveness of commitment and value of object of commitment
Formal Studies	Language of semantics, logic, mathematics	Sample symbolic systems, and symbols of inductive and deductive thinking	Symbolic system, and truth, validity, and deductive form
Social Studies	Ordinary language, specialized language, mathematics	Individual and social (human) behavior	Experience, reason, learning, family, society, state, etc.; consistency, truth, and utility of concepts
Studies of ultimate orientations	Ordinary language, specialized language of philosophy and theology	Systems of philosophy and practices and beliefs of religion	Being, ultimate value, ultimate commitment, and knowledge of these; coherence, generality and applicability of concepts

H. STUDY AND PRACTICE

In the ordinary course of human affairs, it is difficult to disentangle the practice of an activity from the study of it. For a self-conscious practitioner continually studies and thereby essays to improve his practice. Usually, a man studies an activity because he is already engaged in it, or anticipates being engaged

in it, and hopes through his study to improve his practice. He knows that the final principle of practice is that study without practice is empty and practice without study is blind. Study or "learning" thus serves an apprentice or a master to do better what he is doing.

It is thus difficult to draw a sharp line between practice that is other than habitual behavior, and study. Studying involves the use of symbols or meanings to analyze, criticize, and revise the meanings in practice. It entails a survey of past practices and meanings in the field, a consideration of presuppositions and premises, and an evaluation of methods. It is both historical and philosophical.

But modern institutions of higher learning in our culture, as places where tools of refined study are in use, represents a peculiar and ambiguous separation of practice from study. The development of modern scholarship and the nature of scientific research have conspired to bring this about. An expert in any field is always one who knows much more than is relevant to the understanding and solution of any given problem in that field. The accumulation and organization of such theoretical and technical knowledge, to the unlearned, widens the gap between study and practice. It means that a little learning as "study" or even much learning apart from practice is a dangerous thing. Yet the burden of modern education is to develop habits of study in students that have an organic and creative relation to practice.

The pedagogical problem is this. A person who is himself a researcher or practitioner in the scientific, artistic, moral, or reflective domain is also apt to be a self-conscious student of his practice and charged with the responsibility of helping others to become students of it. Ambiguity and constraint arise at the point where he does not have time, interest, ability, resources, or responsive subjects to train them to become not only students of his kind of technic but practitioners as well. He is charged with the responsibility of making a student of art out of a young person who may not have practiced an art, or of making a student of the sciences out of one who has not practiced any of the sciences.

We are inclined to lament the fact that not sufficiently often do we find men and women who are both good researchers and good teachers. But theirs are quite distinct tasks. For a person may be excellent at a certain kind of science or art and be a poor student of practice in general, for various reasons. Or, he may be excellent at both technic and study but not have the skill to induct young persons into either. There is also the problem of obtaining the subjects whose background of practice, knowledge, and motivation prepares them to be fit subjects for the education desired.

Perhaps the teachers in the Humanities have resolved the dilemma of practice and study by attempting only (with exceptional cases) to develop students of the fine arts and not poets, essayists, painters, musicians, and the like.

The danger in this decision (which has the advantage of economy) is that students tend to become appreciators and knowers of the arts rather than creators. Appreciation and knowledge are all to the good but can easily degenerate into parasitic dilettantism if not enriched and corrected in the context of one's own struggles and achievements. A student of the arts who is not himself trying

to express his own authenticity can become an idolator of the past, a prey of abstractions, and a victim of the dominant fashion or critical opinion. Unlike the true expert, his wide knowledge is an excess of irrelevancies. What is needed is a creative balance between artistic practice and theory, between the "cultural heritage" and present interest, between the abstractions of books and lectures and discussions, and the concrete and vivid experiences of working in a tangible medium.

In the Natural Sciences, on the other hand, teachers, torn by conflicting demands, simultaneously and ambiguously try to transform the young person into a practitioner as well as a student of some science. The result is unsatisfactory on both counts. Those Natural Science courses seem to have succeeded best when they modestly endeavored to introduce the student into some of the basic principles, ideas, methods, and norms of the sciences. With respect to the problem of practice and study, the Social Sciences are probably the most easily taught, for the typical college Freshman has been practising socialization for some 18 years. Moreover, in an other-directed America he is likely to have developed some self-consciousness about it—*more* likely if he is a she.

I. The Relations of the Disciplines to Activities and to Each Other

It should be observed that every discipline has standards and procedures appropriate to its subject matter and therefore seeks knowledge and norms of criticism. In this sense every discipline has a kinship with the pursuit of scientific knowledge (for it is cognitive) and with the arts (for it is critical or normative). Every discipline is also implicitly moral or religious, for it implies and employs action or commitment. And it is allied to the formal disciplines of philosophy (semantics, logic, and mathematics—a branch of logic) in so far as it seeks to organize knowledge.

While what separates the disciplines, therefore, is in part the language they use and the manner in which they treat their matter, what essentially differentiates them are their various subject matters. The Natural Sciences take as their subject matter nature—the types or orders that surround and sustain or threaten humanity. The Humanities concern themselves with values, chiefly esthetic. The Study of Religion looks at, analyzes, and criticizes the values of action and commitment, especially supreme commitment. And the Formal Disciplines study the principles and rules of symbolic systematization.

As Psychology links man and his expressions in the Arts and Religion (in, let us say, the Humanities) to the natural order and links the individual to society (via physiological psychology on the one hand and social psychology on the other)—so the other Social Sciences link the individual human being to his setting in society. History in turn is the discipline in the Social Sciences that interprets man in society but also under the influence of changing societies and meanings. And it is simultaneously the bridge between those studies that occupy themselves with the selected human artifacts of human life (products of the arts and sciences) and those studies that look at man in his social setting.

Further, Philosophy on its speculative (as contrasted with analytical) side—and Theology in its confessional function—endeavor to link nature, man, and society to the universe, or to certain elements in or beyond it that are taken to

have ultimate significance for man and his world. As a generic discipline that embraces all species of inquiry into Religion, and ultimate significance (Theology may be atheistic, as early Buddhism), but unlike Speculative Philosophy, it is interested in the implications of this issue for man's action and supreme commitment. It goes beyond the study of morals and religious behavior to inquire into what is prescribed or required of man by what is ultimate. Both Speculative Philosophy and Theology are cognitive and normative, but the former is primarily cognitive and the latter is primarily normative.

To be sure, all the disciplines display or study all four phases of human action, for every human action exhibits them and every study imports a studier who displays them. A physicist seeks knowledge about physical particles; and while he does not study valuation or action he makes decisions and commits himself in certain ways in the context of his physical inquiry. Such decisions and commitments are not merely disciplinary; they are personal and have social consequences. Consider the social consequences of physics, chemistry, and biology for food supply, medicine, population, and warfare today.

A physicist would cease to be a physicist if he took as his primary subject of inquiry social consequences or valuations. He would metamorphose into a sociologist or practitioner of the Humanities. Yet he may contribute something more than a narrowed and isolated physics to the fund of human knowledge, his physics may be fructified, and his students may be more fully humanized, if he is aware of the complex dimensions of human experience which are neglected in concentrated analysis but which pervasively affect and are affected by his inquiry. One cannot think about the cosmos all at once, but neither can one begin to understand a phenomenon truly until one begins to see it in its connections, and particularly its human connections. If the sciences cannot be so connected with human concerns, we should not pretend that they belong together in an organic way in the curriculum of requirements. But a scientist in his way is no less human than a humanist.

It may seem strange to say that physics (or any discipline) would be fructified by concentrating less intently upon its manifest subject matter and considering its context—in individual behavior, in society, in human history, in the domain of abstract thought where civilizations no less than physics take their rise. We are used to thinking that the way to get on with a job is to hire a specialist who knows his business, be he a plumber, an electrician, or a physicist. This is so, if the job is clearly defined. And it is possible to define the job clearly where you want the toilet or the TV set fixed. But what is the job of the physicist? Simplify the question, if you will, and take him out of the liberal arts college. Set him to "pure research," with what appears to be unfettered freedom. Physics then (as always, I should suppose) would involve some discovery of new factors and connections, some sense of exhilaration that one is crossing boundaries in one's knowledge or filling in areas of ignorance. It would involve the thrill of novel insight. How does this obtain? Not by following established routine. Quite the contrary: by imaginatively challenging the presuppositions of prevailing thought. And the suggestion of a new speculative model may come from another field, as Darwin's hypothesis was suggested by Malthus.

What is called for is not some imaginative genius at the head of every physics class, but someone who can help himself and his students to see general ideas and discover their exemplification in particular phenomena. This is what insight is; it is what constitutes the creativity of science and art; and it is what all can participate even if the general idea is not original, for it can at least be psychologically novel and educative in its effects.

Moreover, such learning experiences can not only bring students to an appreciation of what science is all about, of how it is intensely and appealingly human; they can emancipate the student from the provincialism of the "practical man" by illustrating to him the power of abstract, general thought to elucidate and organize a society of phenomena. In *The Function of Reason* Whitehead remarks:

> Millions had seen apples fall from trees, but Newton had in his mind the mathematical scheme of dynamic relations: millions had seen lamps swinging in temples and churches, but Galileo had in his mind his vaguer anticipation of this same mathematical scheme: millions had seen animals preying on each other, vegetables choking each other, millions had endured famine and thirst, but Charles Darwin had in his mind the Malthusian scheme. The secret of progress is the speculative interest in abstract schemes of morphology.[5]

F. S. C. Northrop has brought this notion up to date by giving it pragmatic application for the pragmatists in business and education. Do we wish to be practical? Well, there is nothing more practical than ideas. Plato and Confucius saw this. And the more general the idea, in its primary stages, the more practical, because the more widespread its applied usages.

> What has to be realized is that the practical man by himself is today the most impractical fellow on earth. Without the pioneer leadership in the frontier of human knowledge of the most formally minded theorists in symbolic logic, pure mathematics, and theoretical as well as experimental physics, the practical man knows, if he is honest with himself, that he will be a failure. Devoid of the most mathematical and even the most philosophical theory of natural science which Einstein, Heisenberg, and countless others, such as Willard Gibbs, Maxwell, Kant, Leibnitz, Newton, Euclid, Eudoxus, and Democritus pursued in and for its own sake, the practical instruments of today's world would not be. Moreover, unless today's and tomorrow's youth pioneer beyond Gibbs, Einstein, and Heisenberg, the military and industrial instruments of tomorrow's so-called practical people are likely to be second rate. This is why one commits instrumental as well as moral suicide when one puts sensitivity to money-making in the market place ahead of the seeking and telling of truth for its own sake in theoretical natural science and its philosophy.[6]

J. Conclusion

A student of the Humanities will aim at:

1. Discriminating and relating the modes and uses of symbols and the major types of expressions of meaning in the area distinctively identified as the Humanities.

(*Continued on page 44*)

[5](Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1929), p. 57.

[6]"What Kind of American Civilization Do We Want?", *The Annals of The American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 325 (September, 1959), p. 9.

ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY AS A GUIDE TO EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

BY LAWRENCE W. DOWNEY

HISTORY RECORDS INNUMERABLE INSTANCES OF THWARTED ATTEMPTS TO INDUCE CHANGE IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS. So often, in fact, do attempted educational improvements fail to materialize, one cannot but wonder what circumstances cause this to be so. Some proposed innovations, of course, are little more than fads and for that reason are abandoned before they gain momentum. Others manage to get initiated on an experimental basis but are never properly assessed and so ultimately fade into oblivion. Still others, however, appearing to be based upon sound educational principles, are nevertheless aborted in their implementation through unanticipated or uncontrolled forces in the organization itself.

This paper deals with some aspects of the latter cause of failure in educational innovation—organizational resistance to change. The paper outlines a theoretical model of organizational behavior; it identifies certain dimensions of the phenomenon known as "organizational equilibrium"; it applies these theoretical concepts specifically to the educational enterprise; and it suggests a series of procedures for facilitating desired changes in public schools.

A Theory of Organizations[1]

Organizations cannot be viewed as independent entities; they must be conceived as systems within systems. Accordingly, an adequate concept of any enterprise must include a perspective on the total system of which the organization is a part. For organizations are comprised not only of formal institutions, but also of informal groups and of individuals. Furthermore, organizations exist and function as components of particular cultures and within specific political and economic environments. It is impossible, therefore, to conceptualize the formal organization without including in that concept, all other aspects of the total social system.

An adequate image of an organization in its social setting includes at least five conceptual aspects or dimensions: (1) cultures, (2) politico-economic environments, (3) institutions, (4) individuals, and (5) informal groups. The first two of these are external to the formal organization; the other three are part of it. A conceptual model of the school organization in its social setting is illustrated in Figure 1.

It will be noted that the school itself is conceived as comprising three internal dimensions: its institutions or formally designated functions and procedures; its individuals with their unique personality needs; and its informal groups with their particular social climates and group norms. But the total social system,

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[1]This concept is an adaptation and extension of the theory of social systems advanced by Getzels and Guba. See J. W. Getzels and E. G. Guba "Social Behavior and the Administrative Process", *The School Review*, LXV (Winter, 1957), pp. 423–41.

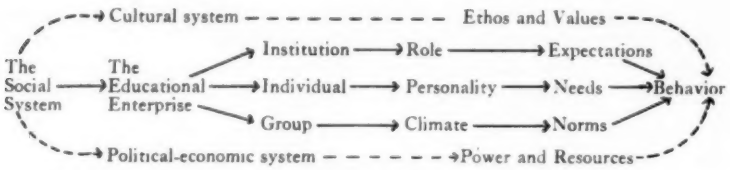

Figure 1—A concept of the Formal Organization in its Social Setting

of which the school is a part, is viewed as including at least two further dimensions: the broad cultural system with its ethos or value patterns; and the relevant politico-economic system with its procedures for the exercise of power and the distribution of resources. Let us analyze each of these dimensions in turn.

The *institutional* dimension, which corresponds roughly with the formal structure of the school, may be conceived as a pattern of individual roles. These roles ascribe to the incumbents of specified positions. They are defined by both the relational and operational expectations which prescribe the procedures for accomplishing the organization's goals. The expectations are the formal, institutionalized norms for organizational performance. They establish the locus of authority and the working relationships among and between superior and subordinate members of the organization.

The *individual dimension* accounts for the differences in people who occupy specific organizational positions. Each individual is viewed as a unique personality. The personality, in turn, is defined in terms of the specific need dispositions which ascribe to it. There are, of course, identifiable needs which are more or less common to all individuals, but there are also needs which are peculiar to specific persons.

The *group* dimension, corresponding to the informal organization, refers to the social order or the climate which emerges in response to the need for informal behavior norms. This social order sets the purposes or intentions of the informal group; it approves or disapproves emerging patterns of interaction; and it supports or condemns the behavior of members and the expectations of the institution.

The *cultural* dimension, defined in terms of ethos and values, is suggestive of the manner in which the surrounding culture influences the progress and operation of a specific institution. In the case of the public school, society holds certain perceptions of the school's task or mission; it holds certain expectations for quality of performance; and it imposes specific behavior norms on incumbents of positions in public education. Thus the broad culture does, indeed, influence the organization.

Finally, it is noted that the institution operates within a particular *politico-economic* environment. The manner in which the governmental function is performed and the extent to which material resources are made available, imposes other kinds of limitations upon the school organization. Political power may reside in individuals not in sympathy with the objectives of the organization; if so, the distribution of resources may not be on an equitable basis.

In summary, this theory of organization in its cultural and economic environment, predicts behavior which is at once the product of institutional expectations, group norms, individual needs, cultural values, and politico-economic limitations. The process of mediating among the forces of these five factors is the process of educational leadership. Within this complex, dynamic setting, the school seeks

to achieve its mission; and within this dynamic setting, the innovator attempts to effect change!

A CONCEPT OF ORGANIZATIONAL EQUILIBRIUM

Organizational equilibrium is a peculiar condition which most institutions naturally seek to establish and maintain. It is not necessarily a static condition. But it is a stable one—stable in reference to the outside world. The organization may be progressive, in keeping with the times, but as it progresses, it seeks to establish a regular pattern of movement. It "finds its own level," as it were, and when it does it tends to condition itself to maintain that level. Having achieved this balanced state, the organization is said to be in equilibrium; it has established the conditions for "no change".[2]

Now the question is: How is this state of equilibrium achieved and how does the organization condition itself to maintain it? It appears that the state of equilibrium is achieved and preserved through the action of a very large number of inter- and extra-organizational forces. These forces are counterbalancing, thus productive of equilibrium; and they are reinforcing to the organization thus productive of a conditioned state. For example, in most established organizations there is an acquired tradition which prescribes that things continue to be done as they have been done in the past; and proceeding according to this prescription is a comfortable activity. But in some segments of the culture surrounding the organization, there is a strong preference for the new and a corresponding prejudice against the old; and this value is in conflict with the organization's traditional prescription. These are contrasting forces, and as they affect the organization, they are counter-balancing. One is operative within the organization, the other without. One pushes in one direction; the other pulls back. Eventually, the organization accommodates to both conditions, as to others, and establishes for itself a tolerable, non-threatening condition of equilibrium. This state of equilibrium is illustrated in Figure 2. Note that the organization is moving toward

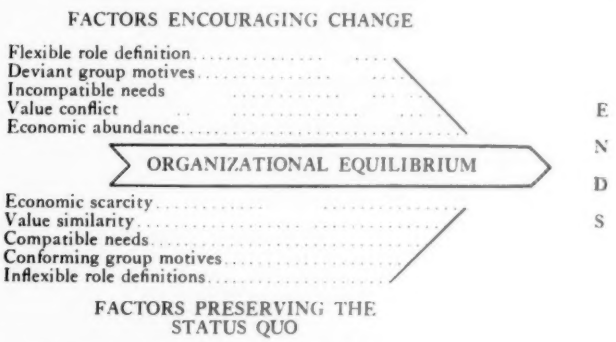

Figure 2. Organizational Equilibrium· An Illustration.

[2]The condition is described nicely in Lewin's "Stable Quasi-Stationary Equilibrium". See, for example, Lewin, K., "Problems of Group Dynamics and the Integration of the Social Sciences: 2. "Social Equilibria", *Journal of Human Relations* (Vol. 1, No. 1, 1947).

the realization of its ends; but there are forces which tend to divert it. Within the organization itself, there may be traditional purposes pulling in the direction of the status quo; at the same time modern or emerging purposes may pull in the direction of change. Also there may be individuals within the organization who aspire to succeed and perceive innovation to be the way to success; other individuals, however, may view security as more important than success, and may consider identification with an established and stable organization as the best kind of security. Similarly, the values held by the community may conflict with the values held by the institution's members. Apparently then, forces in any one dimension may be counter-balanced by opposing forces in that same dimension or in one or more of the other dimensions. Thus, the expectations an organization holds for an individual role may be quite incompatible with the individual's needs, the culture's values, the group's intentions or the environment's limitations. In time, however, the conflicts will resolve themselves; the organization will accommodate all forces; and equilibrium will be established.

It should be noted again that equilibrium is *not* a static condition except, perhaps, in a few rare instances. Organizations differ considerably in the amount of change or progress they are able to tolerate. Some institutions accommodate a very dynamic, progressive state; in others, forces counterbalance one another in such a way that almost nothing ever changes or improves.

EQUILIBRIUM IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL

The public school in equilibrium is a phenomenon not unlike that of any other formal organization. Consider again the concept of organization illustrated in Figure 1; it was concluded that organizational behavior is at once a product of institutional role expectations, group climate norms, individual personality needs, cultural values, and environmental limitations. Consider now the concept of organizational equilibrium illustrated in Figure 2; it was implied that these same expectations, norms, needs, values, and limitations provide a basis for identifying and categorizing equilibrium-producing forces in an organization. Thus it would appear, that in order to describe a specific organization in equilibrium, it is necessary to identify the behaviors or forces which ascribe to each of the five dimensions.

At this point it should be noted that this discussion relates to the public school in the abstract, without reference to a particular public school; thus, an attempt will be made to identify general types of forces—types more definitive than those provided by the model of the social system but less definitive than those which might be identified for a specific school. Our task then is to define or elaborate the expectations, the norms, the needs, the values, and the limitations as they might exist in a typical public school.

1. The role expectations held for the members of a public school organization have three identifiable components: those relating to organizational purpose, those relating to the structure for member interaction, and those relating to quality of performance. That is to say, the institution expects each role incumbent, each teacher, to subscribe to the institutionalized values, the purposes of the school; it expects his activities to be co-ordinated in a particular way with the activities of other teachers; and it expects a certain quality of performance in his application of means to ends.

2. Similarly, the norms established by informal groups appear to have three discrete components corresponding roughly with the role expectation components. The informal group expects its members to subscribe to accepted values or intentions; it prescribes an approved pattern of membership interaction; and it imposes certain standards of behavior.

3. The needs of individuals are complex; they are difficult to summarize. Argysis[3] has suggested seven, however, which appear to reduce roughly to three: the need for self-determination or simply to live by one's own values; the need for security in inter-relations with others; and the need to succeed in the performance of one's function. Note the similarity between these individual needs and the institutionalized role expectations.

4. The cultural values which impinge most influentially upon the school are: the public's perception of the purpose of the school; the public's view of the relationships between the school and other public institutions; and the behavior norms that society imposes upon all incumbents of public school offices.

5. At the politico-economic level, the forces which appear to exercise the greatest effect on the public school are: the locus of political power; the adequacy or inadequacy of the physical conditions; and the availability or non-availability of technological devices.

These forces are summarized in Figure 3. They are regarded as equilibrium-producing forces because together they comprise the composite of *all* the forces critical to the school organization, and because they do, indeed, counter-balance one another.

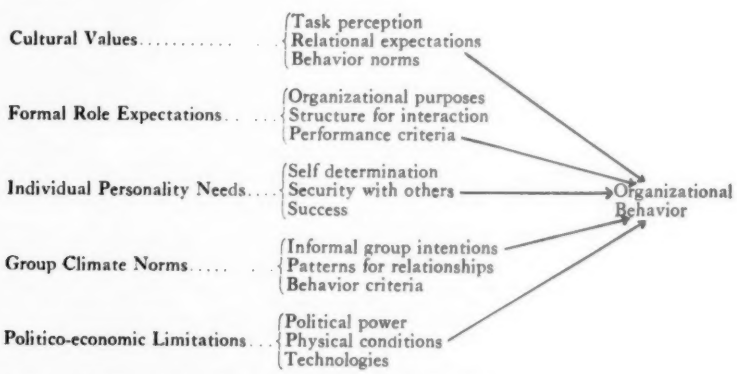

Figure 3. Summary of Forces in Equilibrium-producing Behavior

INITIATING CHANGE IN SCHOOLS

It has been suggested that change may be initiated most effectively in an organization through the action of some kind of "change agent".[4] This suggestion

[3]Argysis, Chris, "Understanding Human Behavior in Organization," Chapter V. Haire, Mason, *Modern Organizational Theory* (New York: John Wiley, 1959).

[4]See, for example, Ronald Lippitt, Jeane Watson, and Bruce Wostley, *The Dynamics of Planned Change* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1958).

coincides nicely with the foregoing theory of organizational equilibrium. When equilibrium is achieved, it tends to be maintained until a new force, acting somewhat as a catalyst, creates imbalances in the organization and stimulates new, interactive dynamics which ultimately lead to change.

The appropriateness of this theory for education is amply substantiated. In time, many schools do achieve a high degree of stability or equilibrium—sometimes such a high degree that the organization becomes sterile. The institution becomes devoid of new ideas; it never changes procedures; it is "in a rut". Such a school is unlikely to change until a change agent is added, unless some kind of disturbing imbalance is created. This agent may be in the form of new staff, a new principal, an active civic group, a new building, or a consultant. In fact, we would suggest that the change agent may be identified with any one of the major dimensions of Figure 3, and the imbalance may be created by altering any one of the dimensional components.

When the imbalance is introduced, there will be immediate consequences for every other component as the organization and the individuals seek to re-establish equilibrium. Some of these consequences may be threatening or frustrating to individuals or groups. Indeed, they may be threatening to the leadership and to the organization itself. It is for this reason that organizations become skillful in resisting change and in re-establishing equilibrium.

It is suggested, therefore, that in effecting change it is important to consider all components of the organization and to anticipate the consequences of change for all aspects of the institution. The following suggestions are indicative of the kinds of precautions which need to be observed as one plans to implement change in a public school:

1. Evaluate the worth of the idea itself. Attempt to anticipate whether or not the innovation is likely to produce increased effectiveness in the realization of the school's purposes.

2. Evaluate the ideas *with* the professional staff—not as an accomplished fact, but rather in terms of a need to be met and in terms of a possible procedure for meeting it. As Boss has pointed out, there is considerable difference between "attempted leadership" and "successful leadership". Attempted leadership, says Boss, is more likely to become successful leadership under conditions of interaction because: *more* change occurs in interaction; changes occur *faster* in interactions; and interaction brings *reinforcement.*[5]

3. Analyze all consequences for the formal organization. Weigh the potential gains against the possible risks. Insure that new roles are carefully redefined; that experience in new relationships is provided; and that training in new skills is adequate.

4. Anticipate the effects of the change on the informal organization. Plan for the accommodation of new sub-groups which will follow upon any reorganization.

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[5]Boss, Bernard M., *Leadership, Psychology, and Organizational Theory* (New York: Harper Bros., 1960), pp. 90 & 128–133.

5. Review individual needs and attempt to anticipate frustrations or threats which may accompany the innovation. Institute planned procedures for relieving anxieties; strive for the self-determination, security, and success of each member.

6. Anticipate possible conflicts between the new purposes or procedures and the community value pattern. Plan to resolve these conflicts.

7. Assess economic limitations. Ensure that resources are adequate for the new procedures and purposes. Anticipate also, the possible reaction of known political forces; attempt to insure the support of power figures.

8. Initiate the change on a trial or test basis. Failure in an experiment is not considered to be nearly as serious as failure in an adopted plan. Furthermore, a test run provides opportunities for adjusting unanticipated consequences, for learning new skills, and for accommodating to new work situations.

Finally, it is suggested that skillful leadership is the most important single aspect of change. The successful leader must estimate accurately his "degrees of freedom" for change; he must anticipate in detail the outcomes for the organization and for individuals in it; he must stand ready to fill any void which may be created by the change; he must time each move to best advantage; and when he moves, he must inspire in his followers the confidence necessary for success.

THE HUMANITIES AND THE CURRICULUM

(*Continued from page 37*)

2. Understanding the processes and conditions by which meanings are created, developed, sustained, transmitted, improved, impaired, and destroyed. This understanding will apply to both persons and cultures. The understanding of the formation and transformation of meanings should properly begin in the Humanities, with concrete works of thought, feeling, and aspiration, with which the student comes into direct and appreciative contact. It should be carried on, deepened, and extended in the Social Sciences. (History is the bridging discipline here.) And it should be pervaded and crowned with the more abstract and comprehensive studies, such as semantics, logic, ethics, metaphysics, and the study of religion.
3. Analysis of selected expressions of meaning.
4. Ability to criticize and judge these expressions of meaning according to certain appropriate standards of value.
5. Knowledge of the advantages and weaknesses of alternative standards of value.
6. Understanding and evaluation of the recurrent ("human") problems, interests, and solutions appearing in the works or meaning studied in the Humanities.
7. Formation of his own set of synthesized meanings concerning these recurrent ("human") problems, interests, and solutions: Being, Value, Commitment, Form.
8. Synthesizing this set of meanings with the meanings that pertain to his own career in college, human culture, life, the physical universe, and whatever ultimate meaning or significance all that may have.

THE PROVINCE OF PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

BY JAMES W. MERRITT

THE PURPOSE OF THIS PAPER IS TO INQUIRE INTO THE ONTOLOGY OF THE PROVINCE OF PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION. This is to say that I hope to demonstrate some of the rational processes involved in deriving conclusions about the nature of this discipline, its appropriate content, its methods, and the sorts of questions with which it deals. Scholarly interest in the problem of delineating the function of philosophy of education seems definitely on the increase, but while the past seven years[1] have yielded a fair number of articles explicitly addressed to this problem it should be noted that these recent writings deal not only with the nature of philosophy of education but also, with its aims, the methods of teaching and its reputation among other academic disciplines. There seems to be a marked tendency to confuse these latter questions with the primary question of the province of philosophy of education. I propose, therefore, to limit my attention for the most part to *what it is* and how we obtain defensible ideas on what it is. I shall also have something to say about the effects of this discipline, but I wish to emphasize from the start that the question of the province of philosophy of education ought to be treated as a distinctly different question from that of its desired effects.

An analysis of the question of whether this discipline should be called *philosophy of education* or *educational philosophy* yields a clue on its nature which is worth pursuing. Although both are sanctioned by precedent, I believe the former designator has more in its favor.

The choice between these two terms can be considered first in the light of their grammatical structure. 'Philosophy of education' is a substantive which designates a relationship of an agent (philosophy) to a particular object (education.) 'Educational philosophy' is a substantive containing an adjectival modifier indicating that our interest in philosophy is confined to that part of it which has the quality of being educational. Assuming that the purpose of the discipline is to denote philosophical investigations of educational problems we can argue that the adjectival form, *i.e.* 'educational philosophy', is appropriate by analogy with the traditional precedent of 'moral philosophy'—a term which fully denotes philosophical analysis of problems of morality. But while 'moral philosophy' denotes an open-ended philosophical inquiry into moral problems, 'educational philosophy' suggests a body of doctrine.[2]

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[1]The reason for the choice of seven years can be readily apparent if we consult Professor Newsome's bibliography in his article in *Educational Theory*, IX: 2 (April 1959). pp. 97–104.

[2]Similarly the term 'educational sociology' refers to a doctrinaire approach to school and society while 'sociology of education' denotes the application of a particular social science to educational reality.

'Philosophy of religion' indicates that philosophical investigations are made of religious experience, but if one were to say that he is studying religious philosophy we would be inclined to suppose that his attention is confined to investigations or conclusions having religious qualities. An artistic (or aesthetic) philosophy would be one which has been artistically constructed, but philosophy of art means the application of philosophical methods to problems in understanding aesthetic experience. A scientific philosophy is one which obeys certain rules of science, but philosophy of science describes the activity of science. And *a fortiori* to ask for logical philosophy means that one desires that philosophical activity be in harmony with the rules of logic, but 'philosophy of logic' means the philosophical analysis of the derivation of systems of logic. Thus 'philosophy of education', meaning the philosophical investigation of educational problems, is akin to other established members of the family of 'philosophies of . . .'. Membership in this family implies that resources may be drawn from the whole body of philosophical methods and insights for the illumination of problems relevant to the object under consideration.

We have assumed that philosophy of education is the application of philosophical resources to the intellectual understanding of educational reality and problems. We can think of this postulate as a clue to the province of philosophy of education, but a clue in a detective mystery, however attractive, is not accepted as conclusive until it has been tracked down or fully investigated. In this paper we shall at least partially investigate the possibility that philosophy of education is what our clue says it is.

Just as no clue stands in isolation, our assumption about the province of philosophy of education must be weighed against existing contrary assumptions. The most obvious of these is that philosophy of education is the discipline which integrates all scholarly efforts to reform education and society. It is true that philosophy of education is concerned with fitting together existing or possible ideas about schools and their relation to society. But the philosophical interest is a critical, evaluating interest which examines ideas to test their tenability. Philosophy of education is not dedicated to the integration of ideas on school and society in order to achieve preconceived ideas of social reform.

Furthermore, the orientation to social reform is likely to unduly separate philosophy of education from other philosophy. Other philosophy does not exist for the purpose of reforming society. The belief that philosophy of education is more or less concerned with the reform of education and society might have the effect of 'outlawing' an interest in some general philosophy which is clearly irrelevant to the reform of society but yet capable of having profound educational implications. For example, a committment to philosophical investigation based on reform might very plausibly serve to discourage an investigation of other philosophical works which happen to predict that society is doomed. The important point is that the reform concept is likely to discourage communication with philosophers who are not at all occupied with social and educational reform.

A second argument against the reform concept is that philosophy of education ought not to be denoted in terms of its effects. To derive the nature of philosophy of education by considering its desired effects in society is to postulate conclusions and from these conclusions set up a doctrine. This is quite different from open-

ended inquiry which is not only not committed to any particular pattern of results, but is not committed to producing social results at all. Philosophy of education is independent in the sense that it is its own reason for existing. Like all academic disciplines and like many civilized activities it is its own end. The effort to systematize rational explanation of educational reality is distinct from effort to reform education and society. The clarification of educational thought is a sufficient end in itself. Thus a description of the province of this discipline is not contingent upon the use to which its characteristic procedures and conclusions are put. As a contingent fact philosophy of education does have favorable social effects, but theoretically philosophy of education need not have any effects at all beyond itself.

The rejection of the concept that the nature of philosophy of education is determined by considering its desired effects leads to some thought about the choice of other terms for denoting its nature. To ask what is the *content* of philosophy of education is to request knowledge about the conclusions which have been derived. It is appropriate to use the term 'content' when interested in the subject-matter of the *history* of philosophy of education. The term 'realm' suggests a large degree of independence for philosophy of education making it appear quite unrelated to the rest of philosophy. 'Province' seems clearly preferable because while suggesting a large self-sufficient area of investigation it does not, like 'realm', suggest complete independence.

Just as social reform is an inadequate basis upon which to establish philosophy of education, so is a postulate of complete independence from other philosophy inadequate.

One reason for wanting complete independence is the desire to keep philosophy of education from becoming primarily an applied discipline in the sense that it can operate only through deduction from the conclusions of general philosophy. Close federation with other branches of philosophy, however, need not imply academic dictation.

Each branch of philosophy, including the five or six classically established branches depends upon each other for insights and procedures which lead to conclusions which are characteristically its own. Some sort of reliance on logic is inherent in all philosophic activity. Sound ethical conclusions cannot be made without taking some position in metaphysics. And nothing can be known in metaphysics without due regard for epistemology. Further, politics and aesthetics would be barren without the assistance of ethics and metaphysics. If such interdependence exists for the older branches of philosophy, it seems quite clear that the need for such interdependence applies with even more force to the newer branches, *i.e. the philosophies of*. Further, general philosophers are becoming more inclined to believe that exchanges between them and philosophers of education are likely to result in the enrichment of both general philosophy and philosophy of education.

The examination of the various existing philosophies of education is a legitimate part of the work of philosophy of education, but study of existing systems should be seen as groundwork for the continual growth and enrichment of the discipline.

Further, consideration should be given to the relationship between philosophy of education and practical activity in education. If we assume that the province of philosophy of education is not contingent upon its effects, this means that it is not the task of philosophy of education to solve practical problems. In particular, philosophy of education should not be confused with educational policy making. Specific policy, however apt or worthy ought not to be called philosophy of education unless it is accompanied by a philosophical analysis of its validity. Philosophy of education is not indifferent to practical knowledge. Neither should any form of philosophy regard itself as an ultimate form of human experience; it is simply a different form.

There is no need to ignore other academic disciplines just as there is no need to ignore other branches of philosophy, but philosophy of education is independent of academic disciplines and of the rest of philosophy in the sense that it must take full responsibility for defining itself and denoting its characteristic activity.

Expanding our previous assumption on the province of philosophy of education this definition is obtained: *Philosophy of education is the application of philosophical resources to problems of understanding actual and possible educational reality.* One method for testing a definition of this sort is to apply a group of rules on definition from logic and to note how well the given definition obeys the rules. Professor Broudy applies such procedure efficiently and convincingly in his textbook[3] when examining his definition of education. I shall use here a different procedure, namely the explication of terms.

The term 'application' relates philosophy to education in the sense that a tool or instrument is related to the work it does. The expression 'philosophical resource' gives the philosopher of education freedom to be selective in his choice of philosophical methods and insights, and it avoids the suggestion that he must first settle the major disputes of general philosophy before it can be put to work for education. For example, if ethical philosophers dispute the definability of moral terms such as 'good' and 'ought', a philosopher of education might apply a knowledge of such controversy to *his* problem of understanding the sorts of moral responsibility, if any, which are inherent in the role of teacher. To say that he *applies* such knowledge means not that his activity is limited to the use of fixed logical procedures of deduction but that his familiarity with one type of problem enables him to be wiser about an analogous type in education. It seems quite possible that the educational context of a human relationship can frequently serve to disguise its essential moral nature. Surely we are justified in hoping that the philosopher of education shall be particularly adept in stripping away such disguises.

'Educational reality' seems preferred to 'educational experience' for denoting the object of philosophic attention because 'reality' is more inclusive than 'experience'—granted that some philosophers might insist that all reality is essentially some form of experience. Some forms of experience might be controlled by forces which aren't experienced at all, and I should not want to deny the philosopher's right to attempt to identify them and understand them.

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[3] *Building a Philosophy of Education.* (Prentice Hall, 1954). Ch. 1.

A question naturally arises about the appropriateness of 'actual' or 'possible' as modifiers of educational reality. It is definitely suspicious to speak of *actual reality;* what else can reality be other than actual? But possible reality can be distinguished from reality itself, and the modifier 'actual or possible' seems necessary as a means of theoretically permitting the philosopher of education to inquire into possible forms which educational reality might take. 'Educational reality' refers not only to actual or possible educational experience but also to factors, forces, and other such reality which more or less directly control educational experience. The behavior of a legislative body debating integrated schools is an example of a force which does directly control the form of some educational experience.

'Problems of understanding' refers to the intellectual analysis of the meaning of concepts quite aside from practical problems. A philosopher of education might engage in the practical work of teaching or administering schools, but this does not mean that such practical work is philosophy of education. The primary function of philosophy of education as in 'pure' science is to extend the frontiers of knowledge.

It thus appears that our definition has some value because each of its major terms does some important work in denoting the province of philosophy of education.

My next procedure is to examine the definition in the light of a philosophical doubt that no definition of a complex entity such as philosophy of education will ever be completely satisfactory. Suppose, however, we were to insist that a definition of philosophy of education ought to be as perfect and as precise as a definition of a cylinder in the field of solid geometry. In relation to such precision our definition would have value only in that it points the way toward a more perfect version. But do we have outside of mathematics any sense of perfect definition even of such a well-known and easily recognized object as a horse. Suppose we are looking for a completely satisfactory definition of a horse, and the definition in the dictionary does not satisfy us because we feel strongly that there might be some creatures which are horses but yet do not fit the definition. No definition other than one formulated by a being possessing absolute knowledge of absolutely all horses, past, present and future, can ever be completely free of philosophical doubt. Our problem of the horse serves to remind us of the tremendous gap between having a thoroughly satisfactory mathematical definition of a cylinder and having an equally satisfactory definition of an object which we ordinarily feel supremely confident in recognizing. The gap between having a thoroughly satisfactory definition of a horse and a thoroughly satisfactory definition of philosophy of education can be seen to be large by considering the difference between recognizing a well-known object such as a horse and recognizing an abstract entity such as a complex area of intellectual investigation. In order to appreciate the complexity of the problem of obtaining a perfect definition let us imagine a philosophical dialogue. First, we reduce our definition to the symbolic form of S is P in which S represents the *definiendum*, 'philosophy of education', and P represents the *definiens*, 'the application of philosophical resources to problems of understanding actual or possible educational reality'. Next we ask a hypothetical philosopher of education whether we can trust the definition. It so

happens that we have selected a philosopher who does not have a better definition to offer. But in reply to our question he proposes that he can best explain his position by taking us on a field trip. So we set forth armed with our convenient symbolic language. From time to time he pauses and says, "Ah, yes, this *is* an instance of P. Now let me see; *yes*, it is also an S." After several repetitions of this occurence we begin to feel strongly that some sort of an inductive principle should reward us and we say, "But isn't *every* instance of P also an instance of S? He replies, "So far, that has been the case, but we can't be certain. My work is to know the nature of S. I am able to say that S is P by virtue of my knowledge of S. Surely it is not unreasonable to suppose that if we continue this field trip long enough we might come upon an S which is not a P or upon a P which is not an S."

We must always expect philosophical trouble with definitions of complex entities such as philosophy of education because it is inevitable that in our limited experience we cannot possibly know all the essential characteristics of such an entity. At one time it was believed that all swans must necessarily be white because no black ones had ever been reported, and it was no minor logical embarrassment when a black species was discovered in Australia. If such a logical error can occur with respect to criteria for recognition of a relatively simple fowl, we can be fully persuaded that the work of defining philosophy of education is frought with greater danger and we are justified in regarding the establishment of a satisfactory definition as an open-ended task.

We can be certain that it is within the province of philosophy of education to formulate and examine definitions of itself. Such a conclusion is entailed by the premise that philosophy of education is an autonomous branch of philosophy providing its own ends. Holding the above definition it follows that the task of understanding educational reality includes attention to the concepts which form our explanations of such reality, and philosophy of education can be seen as the intellectual guardian of definitions and terms which provide the basic elements of thought about educational events. Other academic disciplines provide scientific data which contribute to the definitions of terms such as 'education', 'teaching', 'learning', and 'motivation of learning' but philosophy of education weighs the data and conclusions. In addition to the above another group of terms requires philosophic examination because these terms are used either in discussion or evaluation of educational procedures, *viz.* 'curriculum', 'subject matter', 'organization of learning', 'teacher pupil planning', etc. Thus, the province of philosophy of education is to examine philosophically terms which are *prima facie* educational in their denotation.

A second group of terms which philosophy of education examines consists of general concepts which also interest the general analytical philosopher. These are not only basic to thought in general but have strong educational relevance. Examples are: 'causation', 'explanation', 'verification', 'value', 'connation', 'moral responsibility', and 'intention'. The philosopher of education joins with other philosophers in pursuing the meanings of terms such as these, but his conclusions would ordinarily be limited to observations on their role in educational parlance.

Likewise, philosophy of education examines educational doctrines which are compounded from individual terms. Obviously the examination of an educational doctrine is more complex than the analysis of individual terms.

One way in which doctrines can be examined is through the method of confrontation which is a method which Socrates used in *Crito*. This method is to take a given doctrine and to note an apparently contrary one which seems to have plausibility. Doctrine A is confronted with doctrine B in an effort to learn the logical relationship between them. If A is true must B be false or can both be true? If both are true is one entailed by the other? An example of this method is that of confronting these two beliefs: (A) "The primary role of the education professor in teacher education is to help teachers adjust to the realities of public schools." (B) "The primary role of the education professor in teacher education is to foster educational thought which is sound academically." To pursue just briefly one line of confrontation, if there is a persuasive argument that someone else in teacher education, *viz.* a laboratory teacher, has the primary duty of helping teachers *adjust* (in the best sense of the word) to schools as they actually are, we would then have strong reason for believing that the education professor need not necessarily share that duty. Further, if it can be shown that (B) entails a full-time job, then we have good reason for holding (A) as false.

The mere process of drawing conclusions from the examination of doctrines entails the formulation of further doctrine.

Philosophy of education is concerned with the truth or falsity of doctrines given by other fields of inquiry within education, but it also formulates doctrine independently. This privilege can be illustrated by reference to the question: What functions, if any, ought public schools serve which are relevant to the reform of society? Educational sociology, theory of school administration, and theory of social studies instruction are also interested in this question, but the philosopher of education has the privilege of independently formulating a doctrine on this question—granted that ordinarily he would want to use the valid findings of other disciplines. Philosophy of education's unique contribution to this particular question could be in bringing to it analytic effort and the traditions of ethical inquiry.

Philosophy of education is sometimes thought of as the final court of appeal for the major controversies of a society. This could be true only if societies limited themselves to controversies which were essentially philosophical. With respect to educational controversy its role is to provide relevant philosophical findings.

The culmination of effort in philosophy of education strives to produce a comprehensive system which accounts for all factors or variables affecting educational reality. The success of such a system depends largely on the soundness of the preliminary work of examining concepts, definitions, and limited doctrines and upon the proper taking into account of all relevant knowledge which the arts, the sciences, and experience provide.

Thus far we have defined the province of philosophy of education independent of effects which it may be expected to have. Such a conception, however, does not mean that we may not expect teachers or anyone else to acquire something of value through serious association with this discipline. Since philosophy of education is an open-ended discipline whose results are subject to further scholarly revision, it is obvious that some students will pursue it with the motive of furthering

(*Continued on page 60*)

EXISTENTIALISM AND THE EDUCATION OF TWENTIETH CENTURY MAN*

BY VAN CLEVE MORRIS

I

AS PHILOSOPHIES GO, EXISTENTIALISM MAY BE SAID TO BE SOMETHING OF A "SPECIAL CASE." Born of crisis in Europe, it has found tough going in a sensate, indulgent, and philosophically self-satisfied America. Imported into the United States it has had to buck not only the well known mass-man, conformist patterns of contemporary life, but also the more sophisticated notion that Dewey's Experimentalism is all America needs in the way of ideological rationale. Signs are posted: "New philosophies (especially gloomy ones): Keep Out!"

Existentialism therefore enjoys only the most precarious of reputations today. Many people, even intellectuals who should know better, have the vague feeling that it is a kind of mystical and somewhat illicit poetry which is concocted in an apparently nihilist atmosphere on the Parisian Left Bank by intense characters who wear little beards. The Italian philosopher, Guido de Ruggiero, for example, calls it "metaphysical pornography."

Or perhaps, as LIFE Magazine seems to make it out, it is a form of lower-class classlessness resembling a morally negativistic "country club", what you might call a super-Bohemian offshoot of the Greenwich Village variety of institutionalized Bohemianism, made up of individuals who are avant-avant-garde, wear dirty T-shirts, live in San Francisco, make a studied effort to look "beat", and get written about by Jack Kerouac.

I don't know that it matters too much whether these people are or are not Existentialists. What quite obviously does matter, however, is that sober and thoughtful attention be given to the authentic message of Existentalism and what this message has to say about the management of the educative process. To achieve the necessary sobriety, this paper means to turn from these spectacular, semi-licit images the public mind has developed concerning this outlook, and to address itself directly to the central position of Existentialist thinkers.

II

What does Existentialism say? It comes as something of a surprise to many people that it is not so complicated and esoteric as they had thought. The focal problem resides within every one of us and it is relatively simple to describe.

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Every human being lives out his every day with a monstrous paradox he cannot resolve. In the first place, you must take the position that you are the most important being in the world. There is no other possible platform from which to view life. You are the center of everything, the focal headquarters for all that you experience. And you always place a higher valuation on your continuing existence than of any other being in the world. Heroic suicides to the contrary notwithstanding, every individual's conscious selfhood exerts a continuing existential judgment in its own favor. That is to say, we assign to our own selves—without any help from Christian doctrine or democratic preachments about the worth of the individual—we assign to our own selves, I say, an *absolute* value and an ultimate worth.

On the other hand, each of us knows that, when you come right down to it, we count for absolutely nothing. The universe does not require our perpetual existence—our mortality proves it. Nor does it take any kind of stand, pro or con, on our longevity. Concerning our existence, the cosmos, in the idiom of our time, "couldn't care less".

Now this, to the Existentialist, is the central predicament of human existence, the contradiction of absolute worth and absolute worthlessness in our being. And it is this predicament which prompts such ugly language in Existentialist writings as "anguish", "despair", "homelessness", and "nausea". For any thoughtful person, if he does not turn away from this predicament, cannot experience anything else.

Now it is true that we have invented all sorts of palliatives for this malaise. The classical humanists invented a set of Platonic Ideas to whose understanding man was in a sense privy. Human exclusiveness in the Rationalists' Club gave us a feeling of rank in the natural order. The Medievalists and, of course, others throughout human time gave us religions, and Gods, and transcendental love to convince us that we really counted for something. And modern man has found that society—other people—can, in a secular kind of way, provide the support for an existence that continuously borders on the impossible. Worth, dignity, value, i.e., really counting as a self, are all now to be found, if one wants to, in the social collective.

The appeal to other people—the modern approach—turns out to be far more powerful than most of us suppose. David Riesman, sociologist now with Harvard, has added a new word and concept to our language, i.e., "otherdirectedness". His analysis and documentation of this new character trait in America in *The Lonely Crowd* was masterful and convincing. But there now come along more detailed findings to document the awful power of these "others".

For instance, Elaine Bell, a psychologist, has found a decided preference for "groups" as against "individualist" hobbies, careers, and life objectives in a group of high school and college students.[1]

At Purdue University, Prof. H. H. Remmers has been studying adolescents for seventeen years. His most recent work indicates that high school youngsters almost always look to see what others think before saying or doing anything.

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[1]Reported in Riesman, D., "Psychological Types and National Character," *American Quarterly* (Winter 1953), pp. 340–1.

Questioned concerning their problems and desires, these youngsters give as their most frequent response: "Want people to like me more." In a kind of scholarly despair, Remmers concludes:

> As a nation we seem to have a syndrome characterized by atrophy of the will, hypertrophy of the ego and dystrophy of the intellectual musculature.[2]

Perhaps the most grotesque, Frankensteinish psychological experiment was conducted at the Laboratory of Social Relations at Harvard University. In this study it was found possible to induce a subject to tell downright lies in order to find acceptance in a group. As the reporter of this fascinating study summed it up:

> That we have found the tendency to conformity in our society so strong that reasonably intelligent and well-meaning young people are willing to call white black is a matter of concern. It raises questions about our ways of education and about the values that guide our conduct.[3]

It is plain to see that in our own time we look to other people to provide the sustenance we all need to be certain that we count for something in this life. But the point is, getting back to our problem, that, while we have historically concocted various nostrums for our "sickness unto death," we have not in any way treated the disease; we have only relieved the symptoms with psychological analgesics. And the distressing irony of it all is that as we find our sense of worth today in social togetherness, we mistake the consequent glow we get for real health. Like the dope addict who relies on a daily dose of heroin, we get the same boot from a daily dose of other people. In this special kind of euphoria, we say with the addict, "we're really livin'!"

Of course, this is not "really livin' " at all; it is just the opposite—it is to be only partially alive. To want the nearness of other people in our lives is to choose a pleasant numbness to the predicament we are in—the predicament of ultimate lost-ness within the paradox described earlier. As with heroin, when we bury ourselves in the social collective we purchase a subtraction from pain at the cost of a paralysis of the will. And to become habituated to it, that is, to crave and hunger for the company of others and to turn gregariousness itself into a moral value (as we have done in modern America), is to testify to the dangerously advanced stage of our situation. Modern man is in a kind of somnambulant torpor in which he has rendered the world more comfortable and hospitable than it really is by inoculating himself against its most distressing attribute, namely, its total indifference to man.

It is for this reason that modern man is not easily convinced that he is sick. He strides about his globe in scientific splendor, matter in one hand, energy in the other, proclaiming his conquest of the elements. But once back home from the campaign, he hasn't the faintest idea of what to do with all his technological plunder. He is lost under a pile of his own war medals.

Now what does all this imagery really mean? To the Existentialist it means simply that the paradox cannot be solved in this way, that to pass from paradox to palliative, to relieve our psychic pain with artificial narcotics, is to pass from aliveness to numbness in this exciting adventure called human life. It means that once we recognize the nature of our predicament, once we see that the full

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[2]Remmers, H. H., and Radler, D. H., "Teenage Attitudes," *Scientific American* (June 1958), p. 26.
[3]Asch, Solomon, "Opinions and Social Pressure," *Scientific American* (November 1955), p. 34.

exercise of the spontaneous human self is the avenue to authenticity as a person, and what is more, once we discover we are really up to it, we will forget about palliatives and pain killers and return to the place where we belong—the stadium of human choice where men can establish their sense of worth, where they can pronounce their value to the cosmos through the very lives they choose to lead.

It is something of a shock to realize that one has a human life all his own, that he can render this life and its works unto any God he chooses, that he can lay it upon the altar of any value he selects. None of us is quite prepared for this recognition; it is, so to speak, too much for us. The ones who come closest to understanding what this means are perhaps the Zen Buddhists. In Zen (which comes from the Japanese word meaning to sit and meditate) there is a primary attention to the nature of the human will. If you reflect for a moment on the fact of one human life completely within your charge, you will recognize the enormous region of decision open to you to make this life say to the cosmos what you want it to say. The totality of your will is so complete that it can even end this life, truncating the message this life is delivering to the cosmos. Thus, the will has domain over everything—except one thing: its origin. To put it more simply, the willing self had no jurisdiction over its own creation. It just found itself in existence. And when the self awakens to this, awakens to the recognition that it is now responsible for a life for which it was not initially responsible, we can see the emergence of the self-same predicament of the Existentialists.

For this is what the Existentialists mean by the priority of existence, indeed why they call themselves Existentialists. The customary view, both in popular language and in classical philosophy, is that the Idea or essence of Man preceded the creation or existence of Man, in quite the same way that the idea of a Cadillac emerges in the designer's mind before the factory hands put one together. The popular conception of God is that of the Supreme Designer or Idea Man. The Existentialists turn this around to say that, while Cadillacs may happen this way, man did not. Man arrived without a plan. He awakened to his existence and is now forced, by virtue of his will, to shape his own design. In short, man wakes up to find himself here; he then sets about the task of declaring his own nature, in establishing the Idea of Man. Hence, existence comes before essence.

I do not think this idea is altogether ridiculous. It is reenacted in a microcosmic way by every one of us in our own lives. We grow up from infancy into childhood quite oblivious of our own selves. We eat, we sleep, we play, we learn; but we are really not in charge of our own lives. This is because we are not really aware that we exist. Then some time around the early 'teens, there comes a moment—which I shall call the "Existential Moment"—when suddenly we clasp ourselves and exclaim, "It's me, me! I'm a person. I'm here!" We may possibly regress at times, especially when under punitive treatment by our parents, to the view that "Well, I didn't ask to be born!" Which, of course, is quite right. But it is no longer relevant; it is perhaps the most ridiculous irrelevancy a person can utter. For the fact of the matter is that whether you asked to be born or not, here you are, present in the world, committed to responsibility for your own life.

Thus, in Existentialism there is an absolute inevitability about the human predicament. We are placed, whether we like it or not, into a circumstance of choice and responsibility. Even were we to choose not to choose, this would

still be a choice, still a signal to indicate what we wished our life to say in our behalf. And what is more, there would be no escaping our responsibility for choosing not to choose. There is no escape back to moral infancy once you have passed the Existential Moment.

III

The world that opens out to us after we pass this critical point is a baffling and difficult place to inhabit. Tillich speaks of it as essentially an "encounter with meaninglessness." He does so not with any sign of deprecation or despair, for we must always remember that a world of meaninglessness, that is, a world that does not have meaning already woven into and embedded in it, is a world which, in a manner of speaking, is "on our side." That is, it presents possibilities without exacting the reciprocal tribute of human compliance. If there is no *a priori* meaning to it—and this is the way Existentialism looks at the world—then we can creatively assign meaning to it. We are on our own. And it is not too early to suggest that boys and girls, as they grow up and go to school, might better be inducted into this kind of open-ended world than into the ready-built, card-house worlds our traditional educational programs would have them know.

For the open-ended world, the world of all possibilities and no compliances (except those that we impose upon ourselves) is the most exciting kind of world one can hope to live in. It is difficult, to be sure, and the challenges it presents may daunt the more flimsy and fragile among us, leading to the malasie of anguish, homesickness, and nausea of which we have spoken. But this is not so much a rebuke of the world as it is a critique of the half-men who populate the earth and require all kinds of protection from the metaphysical elements. They are huddling together in their air-conditioned huts—their enclosed orthodoxies and their insulated societies—where all is relatively peaceful and serene, convincing each other of their essential preciousness as human beings in the total scheme of things. These people are, of course, entitled to their own air-conditioning; but they cannot claim full human stature, in Existentialist terms, until they realize that the world, the real world of men, is outside in the cold and heat of brute circumstance.

Albert Camus has written vividly of this world, of the strangeness of it, of the sense of rebellion we feel at attempts to screen it out and filter it down to make it less strange and less real. As one of his commentators has so aptly said, "The work of Albert Camus is of the kind that requires us to be worthy of it."[4]

To be worthy of an author is to be worthy of the kind of existence he describes. It is to be worthy of the role that human beings have been cast in, the role of ultimate moral choice. I think, in a way, that, for all their self-conscious rebellion, the so-called San Francisco Group are testing to see if they are worthy of this kind of world. They have chosen to move out of the air-conditioned moral system of upper-middle-class America, where split-levels, station wagons, and togetherness have become indiscriminate badges of the amorphous elite. They have ripped to shreds, voluntarily, their protective canopy of orthodox values: working for a living, striving to get ahead, purchasing amusement in prepared packages on television and at the drive-in. They have instead nihilistically

[4]Maquet, Albert, *Albert Camus: The Invincible Summer*, tr. fr. Fr. by H. Briffault (New York, G. Braziller Inc., 1958), p. vii.

turned away from this and struck out on their own, in some kind of unpiloted search for meaning in modern life.

What they will find no one can know. But they are quite certainly living a fuller kind of life than the rest of us as we plod through day after day making only those motions and uttering only those thoughts which have been thoroughly roadtested for acceptability. I do not mean to say that their life is necessarily any higher, only that it is fuller in the sense of involvement in moral choice. There is nothing essentially superior about being an odd-ball. Professional odd-balls—what I have referred to elsewhere as "card-carrying Bohemians"—have no more Existentialist rank than anyone else. But whoever involves himself in problems of moral judgment, whoever deliberately inserts himself into situations requiring human decision, he is the one for whom the Existentialist will hold a place in whatever might be an Existentialist's heaven.

This is so for the simple reason that an individual cannot be expected to take charge of his own life, to fashion in the living of his life a statement of what he thinks his life is all about, if he refuses to involve himself in moral decision. There is no more chance for him to do this than there is for Mickey Mantle to hit 61 home runs next year by sitting out every other game to keep his strikeout total down. If we mean to assert our humanity, it can only be done in the thick of the human predicament, not in some comfortable isolation booth of social convention. And it is precisely because modern man has chosen the isolation booth, in preference to the bracing but admittedly difficult moral weather outside, that Existentialism becomes so relevant today.

The paradox of the human self, if confronted seriously, no doubt stirs up every metaphysical anguish imaginable; but one thing is certain—it cannot be resolved lying down. The only proper posture to assume in the face of this paradox is to live our lives *as if* what we do and say shall be added up somewhere as our contribution to the definition of Man. We need assume neither that we count for everything nor that we count for nothing in this world; the only imperative is that we recognize that what we *do* count for will be determined by what we "say" with our own individual lives. And to do this, we must accept total involvement in the moral situation of man, total entanglement in the net of choice which is the only world the self can truly inhabit.

IV

Now what can all of this bizarre language have to do with educating boys and girls; what, to be specific, would an Existentialist program of education be like? To answer this question, we must refer briefly to the popular meaning of education in modern, civilized society. We are told on good authority that the school is above all a *social* institution, that its principal function in modern life is to recreate in each individual the beliefs, outlooks, behaviors, and preferences of the society which it serves. To do this effectively and efficiently we in America have insisted via compulsory attendance laws that all of our youngsters participate in this activity. To assert that we have socialized the educational process in this country is to utter the most fatuous of understatements; we have taken John Dewey at his word and turned education into the crowning paradigm of corporate group life.

Now this is all very good and there is nothing particularly pernicious or monstrous about it. But it does tend to blur the image we have of the developing individual. The school is not just a social institution; it is also an "individual" institution, i.e., an institution for individuals. Indeed it is somewhat of an irony, pointed out some years ago by Prof. Boyd Bode, that while so-called progressive education pretended to give so much new prominence to the individual in its educational doctrine, it wound up burying him in group dynamics in the socialized learning process. We are now called upon to extricate the poor fellow from the crushing overload of social controls that he takes on in school and to find again that the school is a school for individual selves quite as much as it is a school for social integration.

What this means is simply that the school must direct its attention to the release of the human self, to the involvement of the child in personal decision and moral judgment to a far greater degree than he knows at present. He is too tangled up in group controls, as the Harvard experiment vividly shows, to learn much about what and who he is. He is too enmeshed in peer-group response to discover that he is there himself as one of the peers.

We thought when we secularized the school that we had driven orthodoxy and narrowness out of the educational process. The great historical joke, however, is that while we have successfully driven sectarian, religious orthodoxies out of the school we have simultaneously driven the school into the waiting arms of another kind of orthodoxy, i.e., the tyranny of middle class society. The task now is to perform another bit of social surgery to separate at least a part of the youngster's school life from the moral tyranny of the community.

To take a concrete example, consider the matter of privacy and quiet reflection. How much opportunity is there in a typical school in America for a youngster to sit still and quiet and go over the personal choices he must make that day? I venture to say that it would be difficult to locate a minute and a half in a typical schoolboy's day for this kind of activity. We have elevated gregariousness to the status of a moral commitment for today's youth. It is now suspicious behavior to declare that one wants to be alone. Privacy has declined both as a behavior trait and as a worthwhile thing in our lives; it is a new and embarrassed form of immorality to separate one's self from other people, to reflect quietly on what one is doing, to locate where one is in the rolling ocean of social experience. The great doctrine of "shared experience", so novel and exciting when John Dewey first announced it, has flooded down over the social landscape as if it were a moral law, and it has flushed us all out into the public open where we can no longer call our private selves our own.

This, to the Existentialist, is the tragedy of modern Western life, and the super-tragedy is that American public education is presently designed to aggravate instead of rectify this sorry predicament. The first task, then, of any Existentialist program would be to provide for more private experience for the child while he learns in school. It is noteworthy, it seems to me, that there are tell-tale signs of this in the field of art.[5] In this portion of the school program, at both the elementary and secondary levels, there is a real and genuine interest in allowing

[5]See Morris, V. C., and de Francesco, I. L., "Modern Art and the Modern School," *The Clearing House* (October 1957), pp. 67–71.

the individual youngster to look at his world and to say with his hands what he sees, without prior compliance with so-called artistic laws of form, balance, and line. It is altogether possible that Existentialism will establish its first beachhead in education in the field of the arts.

But the provision of private experience in the program of the school is not all, simply because it is not enough. What one does with his privacy, what content he puts into his reflection is the vital statistic of learning. And the Existentialist educator is necessarily interested in having the youngster fill his quiet moments with the personal judgments he must make concerning his own life. That is to say, his reflections should contain the subject matter of moral choice. If the Humanists wish to fill the mind with the content of our intellectual past and if the Experimentalists wish to develop trained intelligence through the solving of problems, certainly there should be a little time in the school day for awakening the moral powers of young people to get them to ask who they are and what they are doing around here.

This might be done, I think, in a number of ways. Reference was made above to the so-called Existential Moment in each of our lives. That this moment comes after we have been going to school for six or eight years is a fact of enormous significance, it seems to me, for elementary education. During these half dozen years we do not, I say, know who we are; we do not even know *that* we are. We are not yet existentially awake. But once we come awake, perhaps around the sixth or seventh grade, the elementary school should seize upon every opportunity to present moral problems to the youngster—at the level of his understanding—to provide small beginnings for the long, slow climb to moral maturity. Preferably these problems should be the kind that have no answer, such as "What would you do if you knew everything?" or "Is it ever right to kill a man?" At the very least they should open up the moral sphere to youngsters to introduce them to the most difficult sector of the world they inhabit. Moreover, if some of the anecdotes I hear are accurate, there is a genuine appetite for moral problems in the child of the age here considered.

Somewhat later in his schooling, a youngster should be given a more systematic exposure to the ethical questions of life. Perhaps he might be asked to imagine himself in complete charge of another individual, capable of making him do anything, experience anything, desire anything, know anything. What, for the assignment, would be his plan of life for this individual? Then when this assignment was complete, the teacher could ask the student to compare this program with what plans he has for himself.

From this point forward, into college and beyond, the individual should be constantly provoked to expand upon this plan for his developing self, checking here, amending there, but always mindful of the control he has over his own single life, the precious offering he is to contribute to the developing Idea of Man. We should all, I suppose, wish that we had more than one life to work on; there are so many mistakes. But one is all we are allotted. Nathan Hale, if he had been a little more metaphysical with his heroism, might just as well have said "I regret I have but one life to give to Man."

I should suppose from all of this that the school in the Existentialist frame would become a more metaphysical kind of place than it is at present. This

should not frighten anybody. I am only suggesting that the ultimate questions of life and destiny should have some place in the educative program along with all the penultimate and lower-order questions which currently claim the student's entire attention. And ultimate questions are the kind which force us to ask ourselves whether our inner sense of worth is to gain recognition somewhere beyond this existence.

If we could somehow simply awaken boys and girls to the "need for ultimate recognition," to the idea that the universe does not respond obligingly to this need, and that when all is said and done we ourselves are the authors of the response this need must have through our own lives and works, then we should be on our way to a newer and, I think, higher kind of meaning in the education of the young.

THE PROVINCE OF PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

(*Continued from page 51*)

a career in the creative work of philosophy of education. Such students form an exceedingly small minority, and administrators of teacher education are more interested in knowing the effects which philosophy of education can be expected to have on the large majority of students taking it. Such an interest can be analyzed into two component questions: (1) What is the nature of that which a normally serious student can get? (2) What favorable results shall whatever he gets in turn have on his performance as a teacher? To answer the first question it seems reasonable to expect: (a) a significant degree of familiarity with the conclusions of philosophy of education *and* the relevant rational processes which have served to derive them as well as (b) some significant competency in philosophical inquiry into educational reality. The term 'significant' in each of these statements of expected outcomes serves to remind us that 'the good' which a student gets from this discipline cannot be expressed briefly in formulations which are entirely unambiguous.

What effects might these gains be reasonably expected to have on the performance of a teacher? It is possible that knowledge and skill in philosophy of education can have some sort of positive transfer with a teacher's work in making rational decisions. In particular there are opportunities to accept, to reject, to hold in abeyance, or to ignore various doctrines from among the many which impinge upon the teacher by virtue of his living in an era which is highly critical of both traditional and experimental forms of instructional organization. Surely knowledge of philosophy of education will reenforce some teachers' inclinations to be both intellectually independent and more intellectually responsible. The crucial factor, however, appear to be connative. Whether or not a teacher gets something from philosophy of education which he can 'take back to the classroom' depends largely on whether or not he 'really wants' to perceive the not-too-few parallels between sound philosophical reasoning and good practical judgment in a classroom.

THE METHODOLOGICAL DETERMINATION OF THE AIMS OF EDUCATION

BY H. J. PERKINSON

FROM A LOGICAL POINT OF VIEW ALL ATTEMPTS TO JUSTIFY AIMS OF EDUCATION ARE FALLACIOUS. Sometimes aims of education are expressed normatively; i.e., in terms of what *ought* to be the case. One example of this is: "the aim of education is to develop the student's ability to make wise decisions" (i.e., the aim *ought* to be the development of the student's ability to make wise decisions). Those who express aims of education normatively claim to derive (deduce, infer) these aims from statements about the nature of man, the nature of society, the nature of the cosmos, etc.; i.e., from descriptive statements of what *is* the case. The deduction or inference involved in such a step is logically invalid, since there is an unwarranted logical type-jump from descriptive statements to normative ones. This logical fallacy, which is a variation of the so-called "naturalistic fallacy" common to arguments in moral philosophy, is now fairly well recognized in Philosophy of Education circles. But there is another kind of fallacy that is not always clearly perceived, the fallacy of equivocation, which occurs when the aims of education are presented as descriptive statements.

When aims of education are presented as descriptive statements, attempts to justify them are made by appealing to the nature of education. Dewey, for example, said that education is growth, so his conclusion inevitably follows that wherever there is no growth there can be no education, or that the aim of education is growth. There is no unwarranted logical type-jump here, since both the premise (what education *is*) and the conclusion (what the aim of education *is*) are of the same logical type—descriptive statements. But this argument does involve an unwarranted assumption that there is universal agreement about the nature of education. Hence, equivocation occurs, since, obviously, in some cases we do speak of having an education which does, in fact, retard growth in some direction; e.g., "My education in the convent left me unprepared to mingle easily with members of the opposite sex." For some purpose, one or more kinds of education will retard growth, whereas for some *other* purpose the same one or more kinds of education will promote growth. This means that judged by Dewey's framework any institutionally organized education is at the same time (but for different purposes) both educative and non-educative. Dewey's solution to this dilemma—to declare that education occurs only when development in a particular line conduces to continuing growth—moves us one step forward but lands us in the same predicament. That is, for some purpose, one or more kinds of growth will lead to further growth, but for some other purpose, the same one or more kinds of growth will not lead to continuing growth. The point to be made—and I believe others have pointed this out—is that the criterion of growth cannot have universal application. There is no such thing as growth in general, there are only specific

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kinds of growth. The use of such an indeterminate term as "growth" tends to conceal the fact that Dewey's naturalism led him into the fallacy of equivocation. But all attempts to justify the aims of education on the basis of the nature of education will be guilty of this fallacy, since there is no universal agreement as to what the nature of education is.

I should now like to argue that the determination and the justification of the aims of education is not a logical question but a methodological one. By this I mean that the universal question: "What are the aims of education?" should be replaced by the methodological one: "*In this context* what are to be (should be) taken as the aims of education"?

Unless the context is determined no controversies over the aims of education can be resolved. Once the context is determined, the problem becomes an empirical one, and controversies can be resolved by empirical tests. The universal question can be turned into a methodological one as follows:

1.1 What are the aims of education?

Since we are concerned with institutionalized education in a particular time and place, these should be determined. The question becomes:

1.2 What are the aims of the public schools in this American Community C in 1960?

To turn this into a methodological question we can rephrase it as follows:

1.3 What are to be (should be) taken as the aims of the public schools in this American Community C in 1960?

The next step is to determine the context relevant to the question. This turns the question into an empirical one. One such context, or purpose,* that might be agreed upon as relevant by the disputants is: "to insure democratic control." The question now becomes:

1.4 For the purpose of insuring democratic control, what should be taken as the aims of the public schools in this American Community C in 1960?

The answer to this is the normally accepted definition of democratic control: "those aims which are agreed to or supported by the majority of adult citizens in this American Community C." The question now becomes a testable empirical one:

1.5 For the purpose of insuring democratic control, those aims that are agreed to or supported by the majority of adult citizens of this American Community C should be taken as the aims of the public schools in this American Community C—what are they?

It should be pointed out that the crucial step is that from 1.3 to 1.4; i.e., the agreement upon the context or purpose in regard to which the question is to be answered. The purpose of insuring democratic control, used in the example, is not vital to this step. Any purpose could have been adopted, so long as it was agreed to by the company involved in the discussion. What is vital is that there be agreement upon *some* context or purpose.

The empirical question (1.5) can be answered in at least two different ways. One way, the way of direct democracy, would be to have all the adult citizens of Community C actually decide these aims among themselves. This is the way of the local, state, and White House conferences on education. A second way, the way of representative democracy, would be to have all the adult citizens vote either to accept or to veto the aims proposed for the schools by the professional teachers and administrators. This, I believe, is the way proposed by Myron Lieberman in *The Future of Public Education*. We are now faced with a new question:

*Following Crawshay-Williams, whose book *Methods and Criteria of Reasoning* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London: 1957) has greatly influenced this paper, I use the terms "purpose" and "context" interchangeably.

2.1 How are we to answer question 1.5?
- a) by having all the adult citizens of Community C actually decide these aims among themselves?
  or
- b) by having all the adult citizens vote either to accept or to veto the aims proposed by the professional teachers and administrators?

If the purpose or context of 2.1 can be determined, the question becomes a methodological one. One purpose that might be determined and upon which agreement might be reached is that decisions regarding aims should be made in a way that will prevent tyrannical control and will minimize inefficiency. Once agreement is reached on these or some other purposes the question becomes:

2.2 For the purpose of preventing tyrannical control and minimizing inefficiency what should be taken as the best way of answering question 1.5?
- a) by having all the adult citizens of Community C actually decide these aims among themselves?
  or
- b) by having all the adult citizens vote either to accept or to veto the aims proposed by the professional teachers and administrators?

This question can be made empirically testable by determining the meaning of tyrannical control and inefficiency. One such meaning of tyrannical control upon which agreement might be reached is that "tyrannical control" exists when the aims adopted are not acceded to by the majority of the adults (including the teachers and the administrators) of Community C. One such meaning of inefficiency upon which agreement might be reached is that "inefficiency" is relative to the amount of time spent in making decisions. The question now becomes a testable empirical one:

2.3 For the purpose of preventing tyrannical control and minimizing inefficiency, that way which results in decisions acceded to by the majority of adults in Community C, and that way which results in decisions being made in the shortest amount of time should be taken as the best way to answer question 1.5. Which way is that?
- a) by having all the adult citizens of Community C actually decide these aims among themselves?
  or
- b) by having all the adult citizens vote either to accept or veto the aims proposed by the professional teachers and administrators?

Once 2.3 is answered on the basis of empirical data there is a way to answer 1.5 on the basis of empirical data as well.

Although, as I have indicated, the purpose of insuring democratic control is not vital to the steps to be taken in the methodological determination of the aims of education, there is one difficulty resulting from the adoption of this purpose which should be indicated. Whatever democratic way (direct or indirect) is decided upon as the way to answer 1.5, the resulting answer to 1.5—the aims—is likely to be rather general, since efforts to get democratic answers to controversial questions usually result in compromise and general statements.

This leads us to consider two important functions of an aim: (1) to let one know when a job is completed, and (2) to let one know how well the job has been

done. If these two functions are to be fulfilled, then aims of education must be capable of empirical measurement, or, lacking this, there must be some agreed upon, empirically measurable, criteria for determining when, and how well the aims are attained. Thus when the aims of education are determined in a democratic context, which I have maintained will usually result in rather general aims, these two important functions of an aim are likely to be unfulfilled.

This difficulty, however, can be overcome by making additional methodological decisions that render the aims more specific or determinate. These decisions will be of the type:

3.1 Given X as the aim(s) of the public schools in this American Community C in 1960, what should be taken as the aim of this department? this class?

These are methodological questions to be decided by the company involved: the department, the classroom teacher—and submitted to the higher authorities (the adult citizens of Community C being the ultimate authority) for approval or rejection. These lower order aims (of the department, or the class) must be either methodologically determined in the context of the higher order aims, or empirically determined to be necessary conditions for the attainment of the higher order aims. The question now becomes:

3.2 Given X as the aim(s) of the public schools in this American Community C in 1960, the aims of this department, this class should be those that are:

a) agreed by the company involved to be specific examples, or actually specifications, of the general aims of the school.
or
b) proven to the company involved to be necessary conditions for the attainment of the general aims of the school.

WHAT AIMS ARE THESE?

In this paper I have attempted to show that the question of the determination and the justification of the aims of education is a methodological one that can be settled without becoming involved in logical fallacies. In the example used I attempted to show how aims of education can be determined and justified in a democratic context. The methodological approach can be summarized in the form of a question: "In this context (for this purpose) what is to be (should be) taken as the aim of education?"

This approach may seem to be predicated upon a philosophy of relativism. Such is not the case. The statements of aims resulting from this approach will be statements of fact, empirically provable facts. The aims of education arrived at by this approach are no more relative than is the fact 'Washington D.C. is the capital of the United States'. Nor are the aims arrived at by this approach subject to the universal context (indeterminate) question: "Ought these to be the aims of education?"—no more than the fact that Washington D.C. is the capital of the United States is subject to the universal context (indeterminate) question: "Ought Washington D.C. be the capital of the United States?".

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